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# PC PowerPlay

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# QUAKE III ARENA

THE VERDICT!
## UNREAL TOURNAMENT

BATHURST!
## DICK JOHNSON V8 CHALLENGE

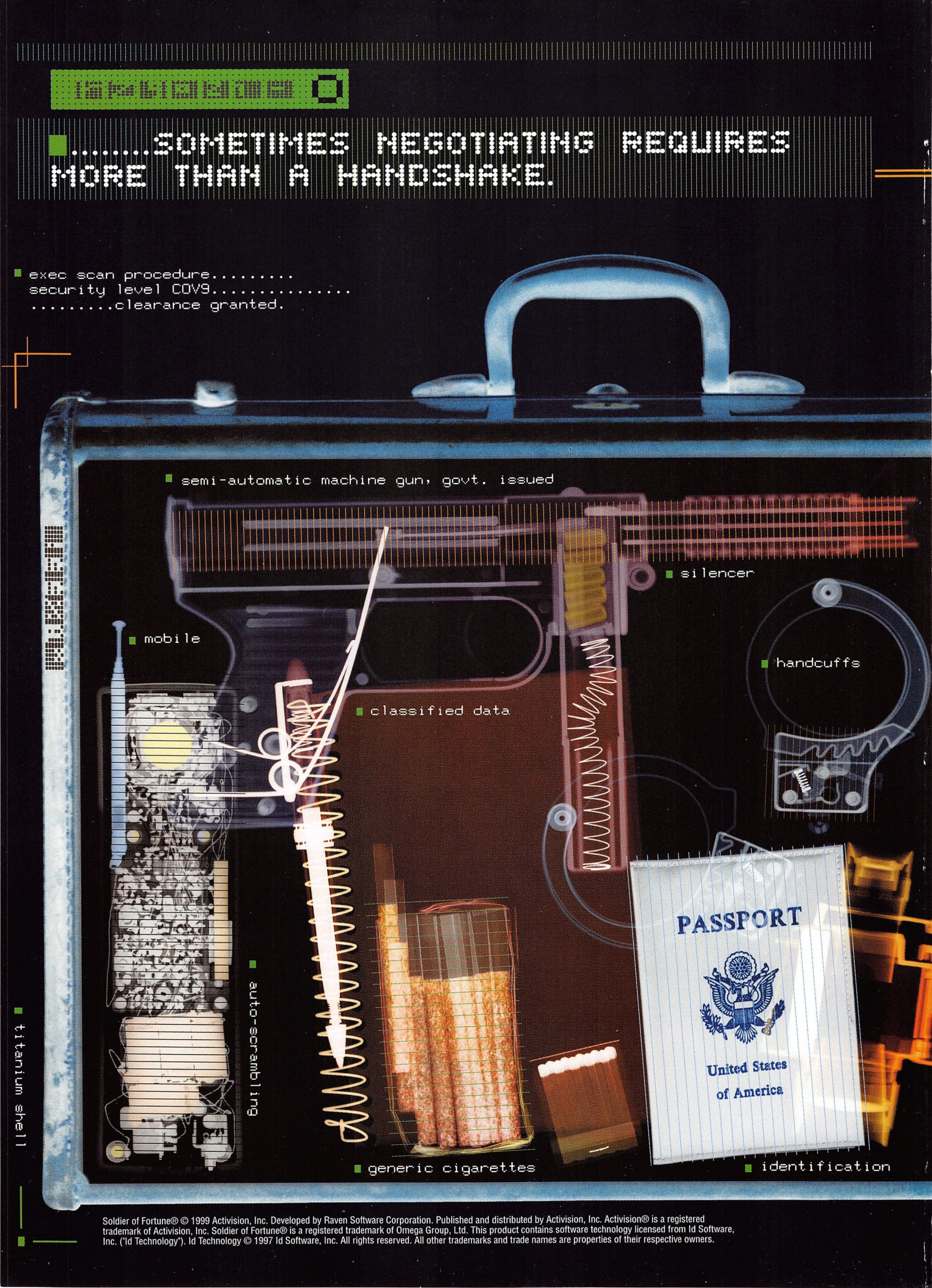
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Saddam's Baghdad Palace



Sniper View in Kosovo

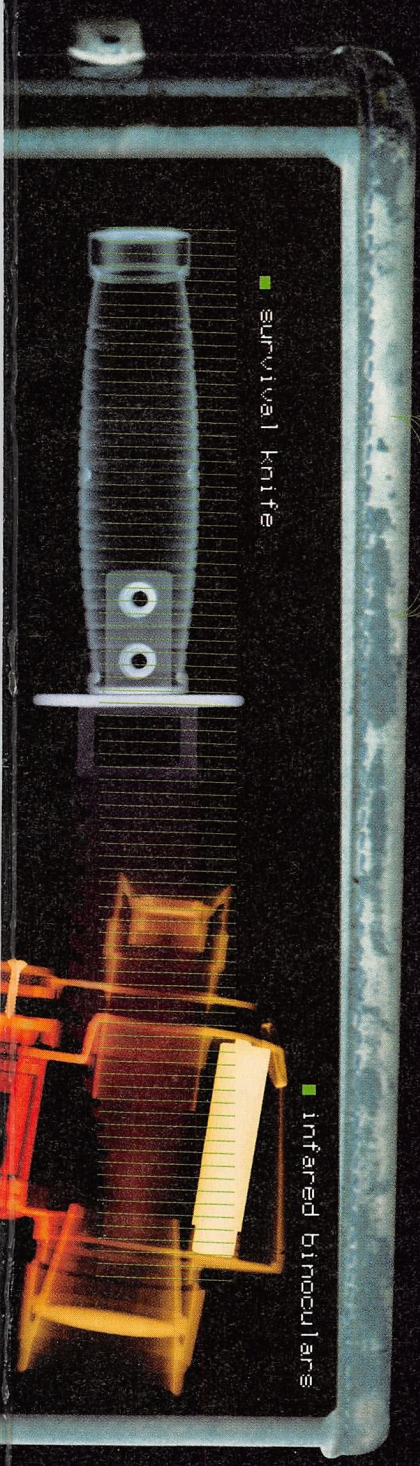




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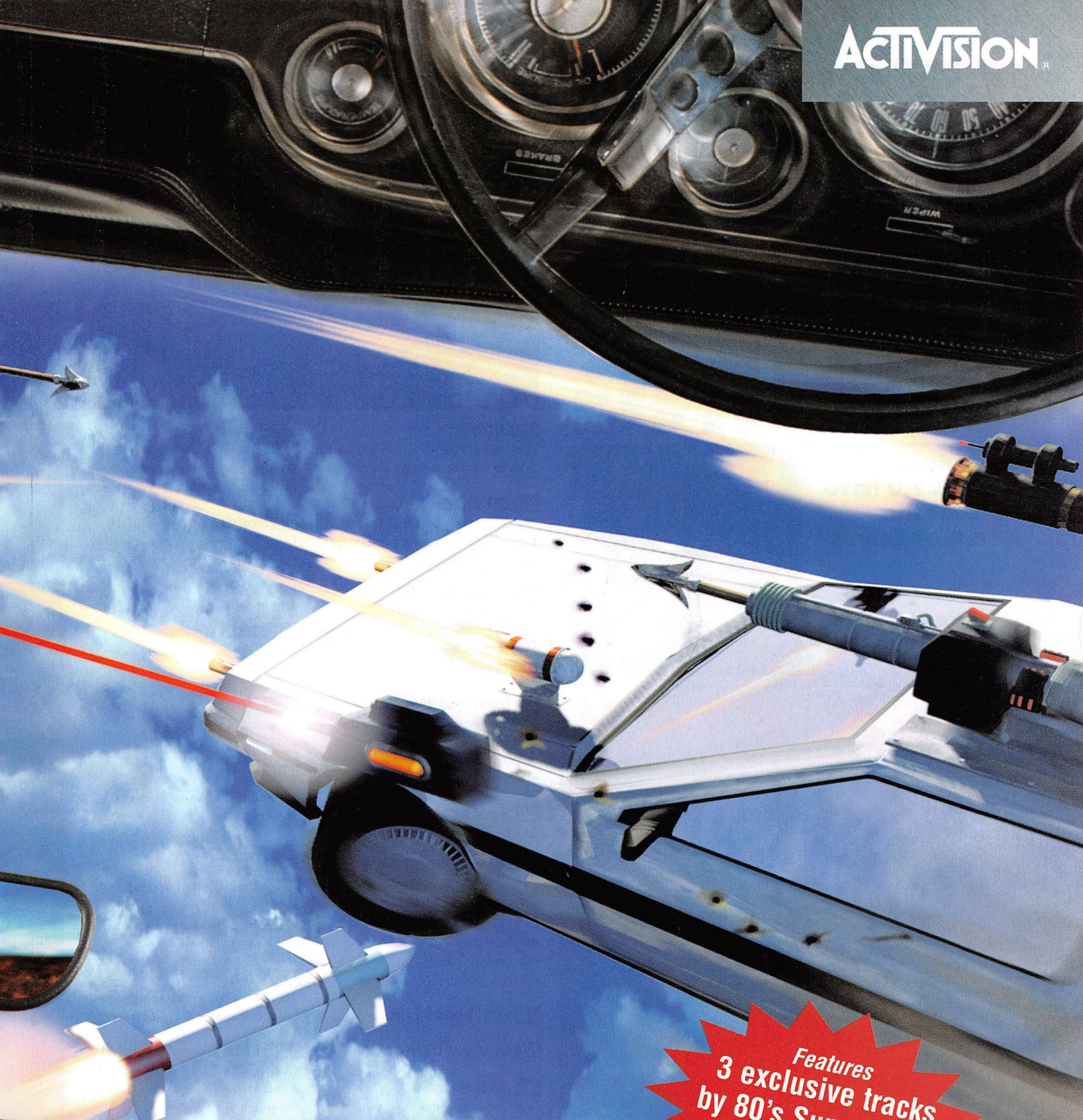


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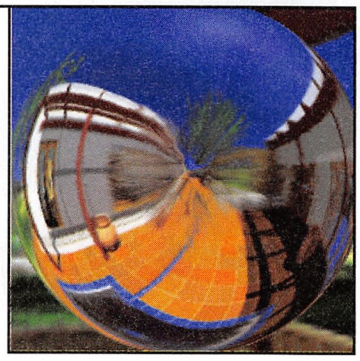
MA15+
Low Level
Animated Violence

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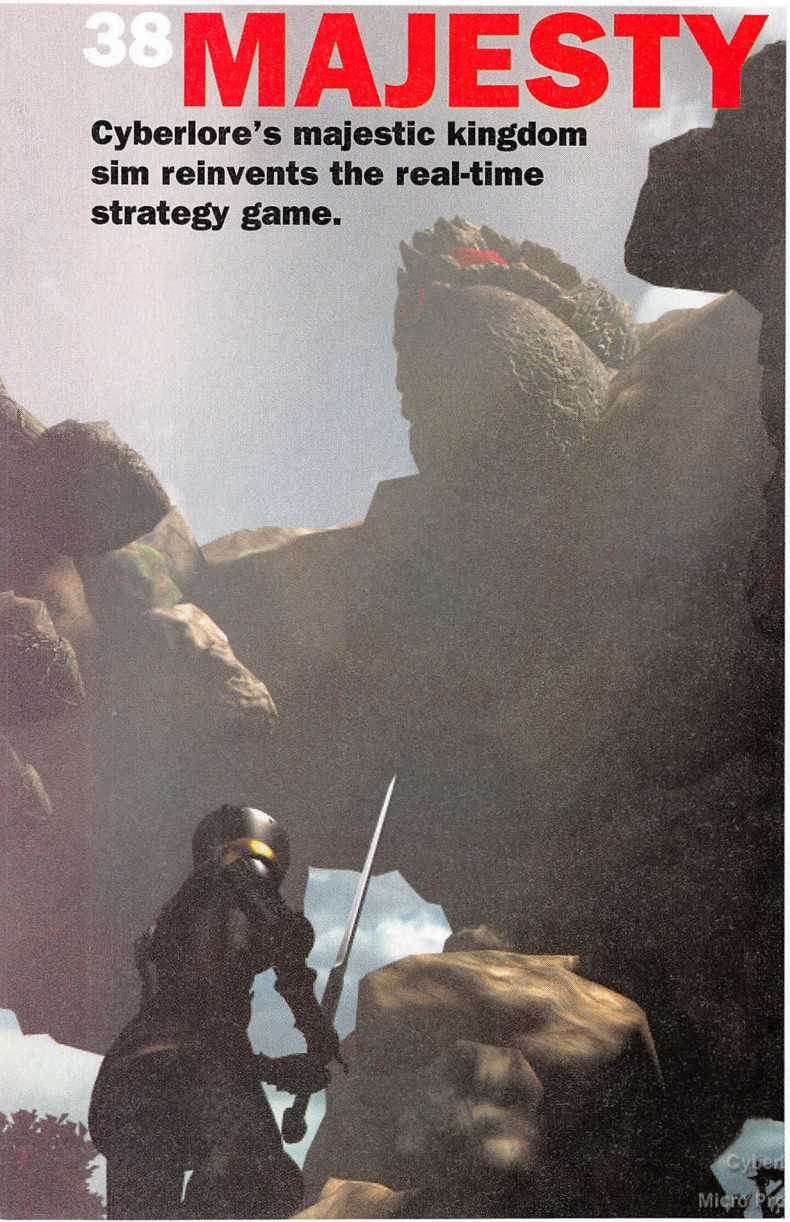
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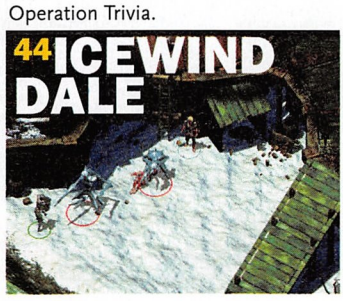
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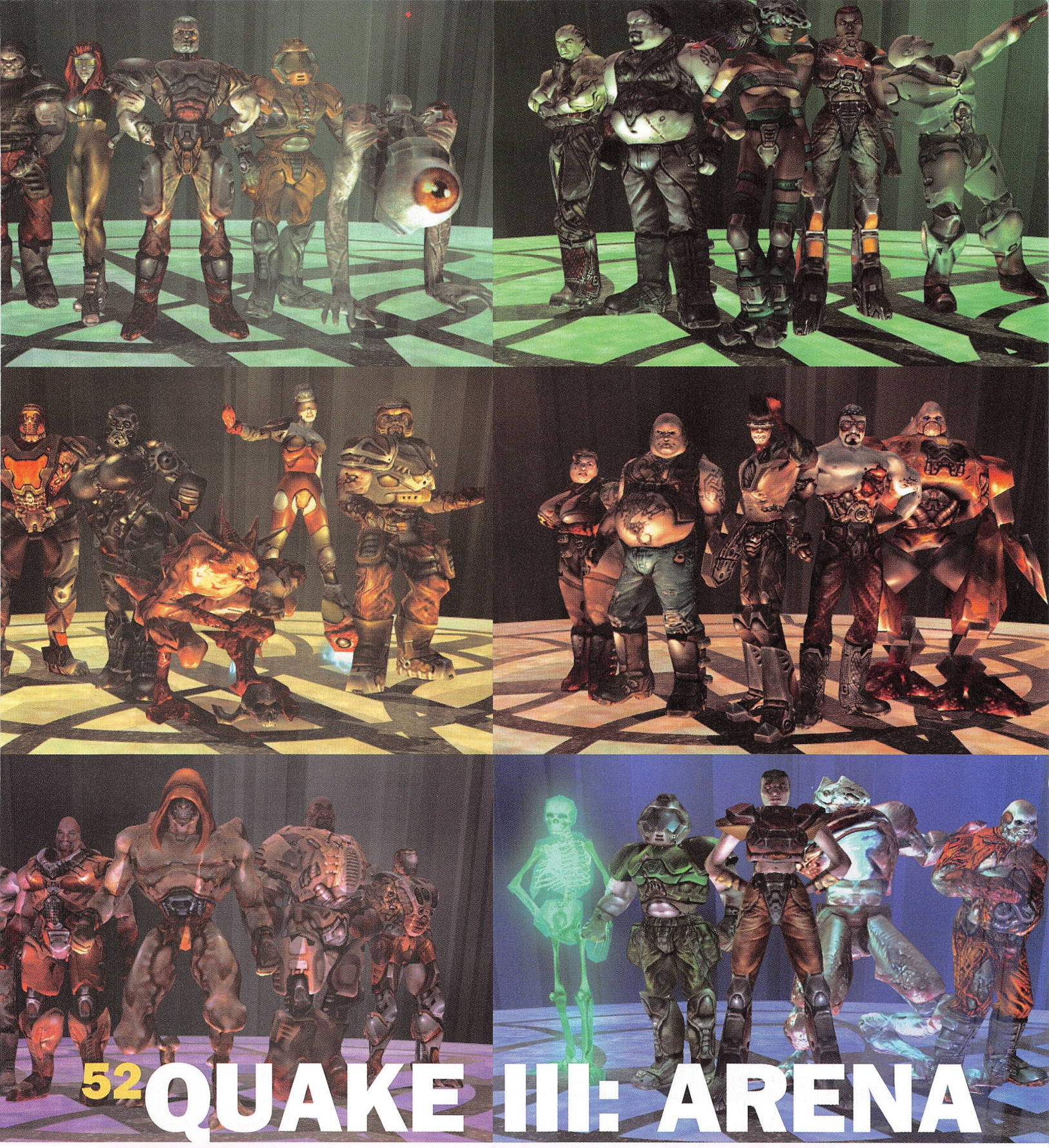
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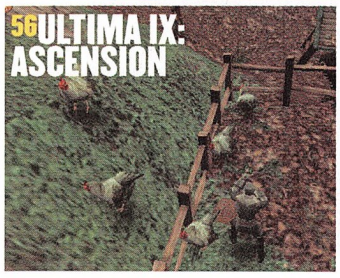
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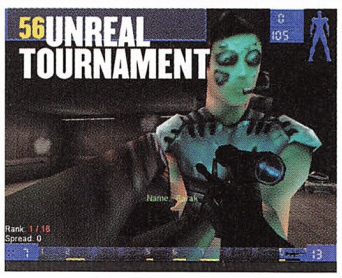


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PC PowerPlay

Editor: Ben Mansill
*ben@next.com.au*
Deputy Editor: March Stepnik
*march@next.com.au*
Staff Writer: David Wildgoose
*david@next.com.au*
Art Director: Malcolm Campbell
*malcolm@next.com.au*
CD Editor: Harry Maragos
*cdtech@pcpowerplay.next.com.au*
Contributors: Brett Robinson, John Dewhurst, Elih Brading, Lindsey Smith, Maj. Des McNicholas, Agata Budinska Edward Fox, Ewan Corness, Elton Cane, Dan Toose.
Technical Editors: Hugh Norton-Smith, Daniel Rutter
US Correspondent: Don St. John
UK Correspondent: Steve Boxer
Photographer: Scott Wajon

Publisher: Jim Flynn
*jim@next.com.au*
Managing Director: Phillip Keir
*keir@next.com.au*
Circulation Manager: Karen Day
*karen@next.com.au*
Advertising Production Co-ordinator: Dylan Fryer
*dylan@next.com.au*
General Enquiries: (02) 9699 0333
Fax: (02) 9310 1315

ADVERTISING
Group Sales Manager: Jo Ley
*jo@next.com.au*
Advertising Manager: Anthony Hennessy
*anthony@next.com.au*
Advertising Sales Exce.: Kylie Evans
*kylie@next.com.au*
Production Co-ordinator: Dylan Fryer
*dylan@next.com.au*
Production Manager: Melissa Doyle
*melissa@next.com.au*
Finance Director: Theo Fatseas
*theo@next.com.au*

SUBSCRIPTION ENQUIRIES:
Phone: 1300 36 11 46
e-mail: *subs@next.com.au*
Fax: 02 9699 0344

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Write to PC PowerPlay at:
418a Elizabeth St, Surry Hills,
NSW 2010, Australia
E-mail: *pcpowerplay@next.com.au*
Fax: 02 9310 1315
CD tech support:
*cdtech@pcpowerplay.next.com.au*
Oracle: *oracle@pcpowerplay.next.com.au*
Setup: *setup@pcpowerplay.next.com.au*
Letters: *letters@pcpowerplay.next.com.au*

What we're playing: musical chairs.
Ben: Wing Commander, Harpoon, Master of Orion, Thexder
March: Thief Gold, Quake III, Mogwai
David: The Nomad Soul, Quake III, Thief Gold, Dot Allison, Grandaddy
Malcolm: Quake III, Pharaoh, R-Type II, Mr. Oizo

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# Thank you and goodnight

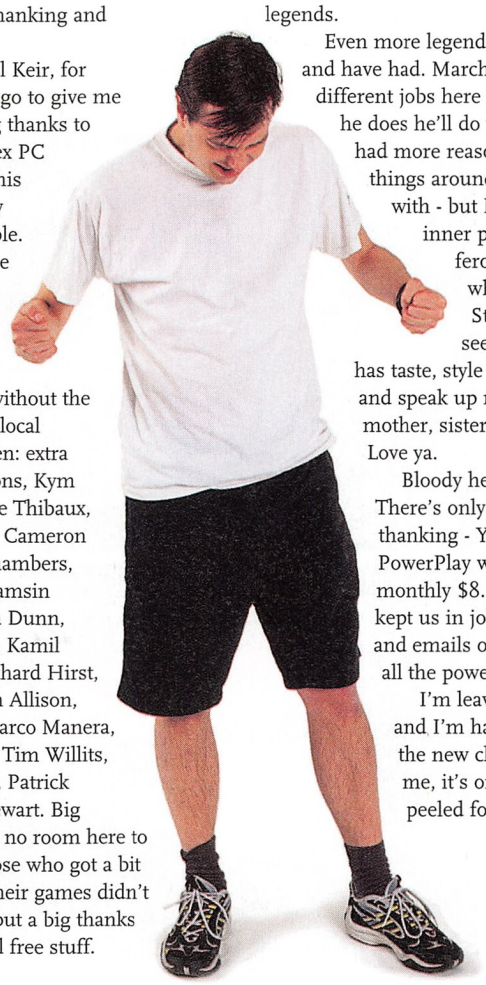
Two more issues to go and PC PowerPlay turns 4 years old. Two more days to go and I'll have been at Next Publishing for five full years. Two more weeks to go and I'm outta here.

Yep, bye. Time to move on. Leaving PowerPlay and this fine company behind...

Being my last Editorial for PCPP, I shall forthwith indulge in some long overdue thanking and congratulating.

First, thanks to the boss, Phil Keir, for making the decision five years ago to give me this opportunity. A seriously big thanks to our new Publisher, Jim Flynn (ex PC Gamer UK Editor), for sharing his experience and making so many aspects of the daily grind bearable.

Thanks to absolutely everyone in the games publishing, development and distribution biz. Making a kick-arse games mag here in Australia would have been tough to impossible without the phenomenal support I got from local games companies. Off we go then: extra special thanks to Sharon Simmons, Kym Warner, Tania Billington, Natalie Thibaux, Margaret Lawson, Paul Butcher, Cameron Adams, Mick Van Raay, Kate Chambers, Amanda Fuzes, Scott Millard, Tamsin Smith, David Packman, Melinda Dunn, Maria Compton, Ross McCaffer, Kamil Gurgeon, Heather Caulfield, Richard Hirst, Sandy Newton, Greg Siegle, Tim Allison, Tony Reed, Luke the Courier, Marco Manera, Andrew McCombie, Paul Steed, Tim Willits, Jason Pang, Rob Harvey, Zenna, Patrick Gallagher, Paul Franco, Sam Stewart. Big apologies to the rest, there's just no room here to fit you all in! No apologies to those who got a bit angry from time to time when their games didn't quite score what they expected, but a big thanks for all the lunches, trips and cool free stuff.



The meat of the PowerPlay sausage is the crew. Having only two fulltime editorial staff, it's our army of freelance contributors that give you the most of the goodness you've come to expect. They're amazing. I won't do a rollcall here because we've had a lot of writers over the years, but to every single contributor that ever wrote words for PowerPlay: you're all bloody legends.

Even more legendary are the fulltimers we have and have had. March Stepnik does a thousand different jobs here with grace and style, anything he does he'll do well. Malcolm Campbell has had more reasons to shout, swear and throw things around than anyone I've ever worked with - but Malcy has a great measure of inner peace. The Poet Wildgoose is ferociously forthright, which is why we gave him the job. Strangely, all who meet him seek his approval. Gareth Jones has taste, style and judgement, thanks dude, and speak up man! Julie-Ann Kwok was my mother, sister and nursemaid all in one. Love ya.

Bloody hell! This is getting out of hand! There's only one more person that needs thanking - YOU! Your feedback made PowerPlay what it is today, your kindly monthly $8.95 (a bit more now!) donations kept us in jobs, and your non-stop letters and emails of praise and kindness gave us all the power to press on. Thanks heaps.

I'm leaving PowerPlay in safe hands and I'm hanging to see what cool stuff the new chief can come up with! As for me, it's online time. Keep your eyes peeled for something big...

**Ben Mansill**
**Editor**

# CD POWERPLAY #45

## Starting CD PowerPlay

Welcome to the PCPowerPlay double CD. We have included all the popular programs to make the most of your PC. Using the CD is easy. Simply insert the CD into your CDROM drive and it should automatically bring up the Menu interface. (If not, don't panic, just click on the RUNME.BAT file to manually install the program).
Once the menu is up, you can navigate the screens using your mouse. Click on the category of your choice (Games, utilities, patches.) to begin. Have a look at the programs, and if you see something you like to try out, just click on it. Depending on your choice, the program will either install itself to the hard drive or run straight off the CD.

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## UTILITIES

### Cacheman

Cacheman is a utility that tweaks the disk cache settings and prevents frequent swapping of the data to disk resulting in an improved performance. One of the biggest faults of Windows 9x is the disk cache management strategy. After all the available physical memory (RAM) is exhausted Windows 9x starts to use virtual memory instead of flushing the disk caches which puts a drain on your system. In order to correct this chaotic and weird behaviour you need to edit the SYSTEM.INI file. Cacheman take care of all that! Just run Cacheman and select your optimisation method then reboot your system after saving the changes.

### CuteFTP

The niftiest FTP client around. CuteFTP is one of very few programs that allow novice users to utilise the capabilities of FTP without having to know all the details of the protocol itself. The strongest point of CuteFTP is its ability to gather almost every available bit of information about files and directory structure of a remote system and present it to the user in an easy-to-use file-manager-like browsing screen. CuteFTP will also keep data transfers to a minimum by means of storing all the data it can to a temporary file.

### DirectX 7

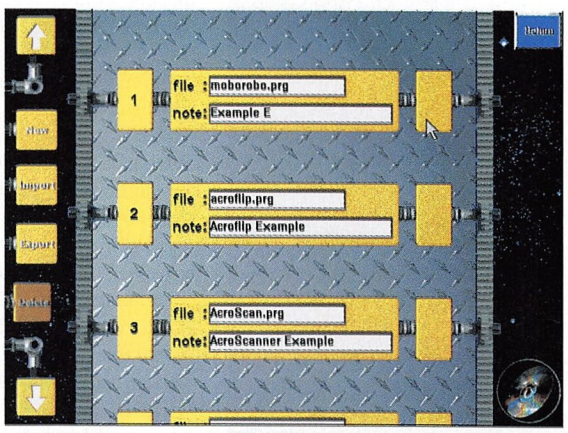
DirectX is the multimedia system foundation for Windows operating systems. Through DirectX, programs take full advantage of your system to give you the best multimedia experience possible. DirectX is designed to offer better graphics, faster frame rates, and more immersive audio when you're running and displaying programs rich in multimedia elements such as full-colour graphics, video, 3D animation, and surround sound.

# Lego Mindstorms

SPECIAL BONUS CD

■ Besides our regular double CD of Gaming Goodness, you'll have noticed the funky Lego Mindstorms CD stuck on the front cover, too.
The kind and attractive folks at Lego want you to know more about their fabbo new product, we agreed that was a fine idea, with the end result being what you're holding in your hand right now. Pop it in the drive and explore Mindstorms. It's way cool. We all love Lego - and Mindstorms is sort of Robo-Electro-Lego. How good is that! With Mindstorm you can build all manner of devices, for both good and evil. The neato bit is that these devices interface with your PC, so you can scan in a map of your living room, then click on Mum's ankles and Robo Ankle Biter will proceed with Terminator-like determination, nipping poor mum when she least expects it (unless she happens to notice the large, brightly coloured thing motoring slowly and noisily towards her, tearing up carpet along the way, but it's your job to plan these things more effectively).
The CD is damn simple to navigate around, with one seriously funky interface that makes noises and moves and stuff. Tremendous! So stick it in the drive and have a happy old poke around Mindstorms. It's good.





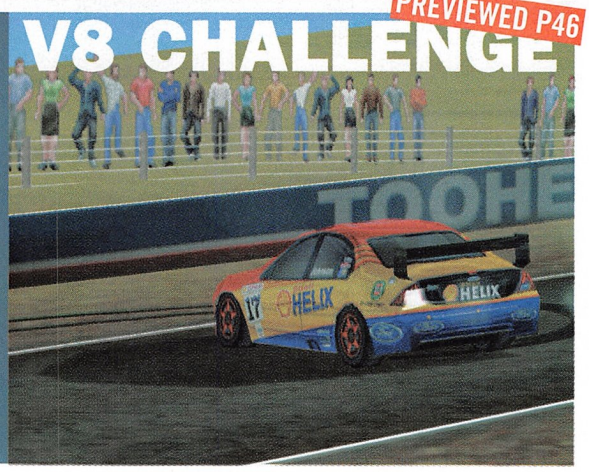




# DISC 1

## DICK JOHNSON V8 CHALLENGE

PREVIEWED P46



**Category:** Driving Sim
**Developer:** HES
**Need:** P200, 32MB RAM, W95/98, 3D Card

■ Engineered using precise racing dynamics, Dick Johnson's V8 Challenge is a virtual (not to mention visceral) driving experience that behaves just like the real thing. The game features a large number of racing teams from both Ford and Holden. It's going to be similar to what you see on TV, the big V8 Fords and Holdens racing against each other for the coveted trophy. The demo contains plenty of rear-ends fishtailing, brakes locking up, wheels that lose traction under hard cornering and much, much more.

### AI Wars

**Category:** First-Person Shooter
**Developer:** Nexus Information Systems
**Need:** P200, 32MB RAM, W95/98, 3D Card

■ In the 21st century the NET is the new worldwide computer network. Every corporation in the world, every military organization, every university, every library, and even every home is wired-in 24 hours a day. This almost infinite information world is inhabited by hordes of agents in the service of humanity. These agents are expert applications that collect and filter information as well as conduct electronic transactions for their masters. It is rumoured that certain high-level agents have escaped from military sites in the early phases of the NET and were never recovered. Your job... stop them!

### Big Bang

**Category:** 3D Shooter
**Developer:** Project 2 Interactive
**Need:** P133, 32MB RAM, W95/98, 3D Card

■ Fail to blow up a supply depot early on and one could be facing more enemies later. With the level of AI the enemies show, this is just what the player won't want. They are all participating in one giant war, where every action influences the outcome, and with reconnaissance missions, escorts, all out attacks and suicide missions, this is one war that they just don't want to miss. Take the challenge alone, multi-player, co-operative or just decide to go head-to-head.

### Close Combat IV

**Category:** Real-time Strategy
**Developer:** Mindscape
**Need:** P200, 32MB RAM, W95/98

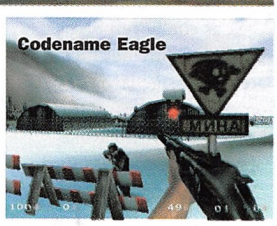
■ Close Combat: The Battle of the Bulge continues the epic saga of the critically acclaimed and award-winning Close Combat series. Sneak attacks, stalwart defenders, spies and saboteurs are among the exciting surprises lurking on both sides of the battle. Whether you command American or German troops, you decide when and where they will be deployed. Launch air attacks against the enemy but keep your eyes on the skies; random weather patterns can wreak havoc on your offensives from above. Are you ready to rewrite history?

### Codename Eagle

**Category:** Action
**Developer:** Take 2 Interactive
**Need:** P200, 16MB RAM, W95/98

■ It is early 1920. The Tsar of Russia has died, and his son Peter has come to power. The young Tsar is power-hungry and is not content simply to rule over his kingdom - his plan is to turn the might of the nation's industry into a powerful war machine with which to invade his neighbouring countries, in a first step to world domination. As his plan becomes reality, the unoccupied countries of the world unite to form an alliance in a desperate attempt to fight back against the might of the new Russian military power. It is now your job to stop Peter at all costs.

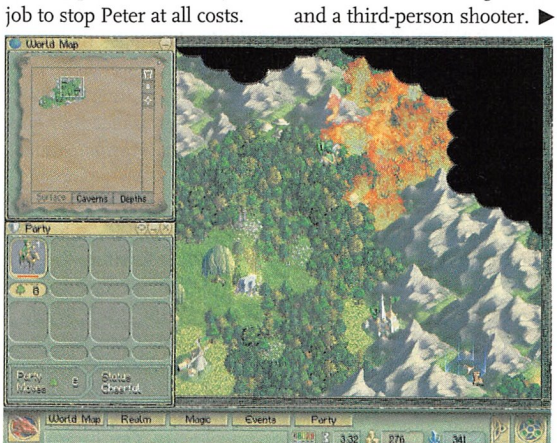



### G-Sector

**Category:** 3D Shooter
**Developer:** Freeform Interactive
**Need:** P266, 32MB RAM, W95/98, 3D Card

■ G-Sector is a 3D action game based around hoverboard combat - a hybrid between an "extreme game" and a third-person shooter. ▶




## Age of Wonders

**Developer:** Gathering Of Developers
**Category:** Turn-Based Strategy
**Need:** P133, 32MB RAM, W95/98

■ Welcome to the Age of Wonders, once a time of magic and peace. An age swept into the ravaging gale of chaos by the arrival of a single uninvited race: the Humans. The fragile balance that existed between the ancient races - Elves, Dwarves, Orcs and others - has changed into a struggle for power and survival in the wake of the turmoil the Humans have brought to the land. Prepare for an adventure where you will uncover wondrous ancient artifacts, awesome magical power, and the secrets of a shattered empire. Ally with the forces of light or darkness to determine the fate of the earth in the Age of Wonders!

## UTILITIES

### Gamespy 3D

GameSpy lets you easily find the fastest servers playing your favourite games on the Internet. It can get a list of active servers from across the Internet, and can parse any finger or Web page for IP addresses. Just fill in the address and roll your own list. There are a variety of optional filter settings. GameSpy goes out to the sites on your list and determines the server name, map name, current and maximum players, and displays them starting with the lowest (best) ping time. You can check a server for all sorts of information, like the ping and packet loss, who's playing, their colours, frag counts, rules, etc.

### ICQ

ICQ 99b beta is the latest release of ICQ, the popular instant messaging program that lets you communicate with friends and colleagues in real time. To seek out a friend on the ICQ network, simply enter his or her ICQ number, name, nickname, or email address. Once your contact list is set up, you'll be notified when your friends are online so that you can chat, send instant messages, files, web addresses, play games or just hang out.

### Intel Processor Frequency Utility

The Intel Processor Frequency ID Utility was developed by Intel Corporation to enable consumers with the ability to identify and, in some circumstances, determine if their Intel processor is operating at the correct and rated frequency intended by Intel Corporation. Beginning with the Pentium(r) processor, this utility provides consumers with the ability to determine standard PU identification of Intel processors. In addition, beginning with the Pentium III processor, the Frequency Test Tab of the utility can also help determine if a processor has been overclocked.

### Jetcar

What's the biggest problem of downloading? Speed. The second biggest? Management after downloading. JetCar was written for these two problems. By splitting files into parts and downloading them simultaneously, the download speed increases from 100% to 500%. JetCar is capable of creating unlimited number of categories, each category has a specified hard drive directory, files placed in categories will be stored in the specified directory, the powerful and easy-to-use management features help you to organise your files in a way that you had never organised before

# UTILITIES

### Kali

Kali is the largest Internet gaming system in the world with over 100,000 users and 300 servers in 35 countries. So what does Kali actually do? Simple: Kali makes your internet connection appear as an IPX connection to your game. This means that all those IPX games can now be played with a number of other users over the Internet. This latest version of Kali adds launch support for Falcon 4, Powerslide, Baldur's Gate, Tribes, Jet Fighter Full Burn, Worms: Armageddon, and Quake 3 Arena.

### mIRC

mIRC 32 is an excellent and very popular IRC (Internet Relay Chat) client. Connect and chat to people from all around the globe. This version of mIRC has very strong filtering and searching functions. Use it to find channels that suit your interest out of the thousands available, or use it to hide offensive or annoying channel names and discussion topics. All areas of the program are intuitively designed, including the user manager for storing information about other IRC users, the switchbar for managing DCC transfers and open conversations, and the channel and topic areas.

### Napster

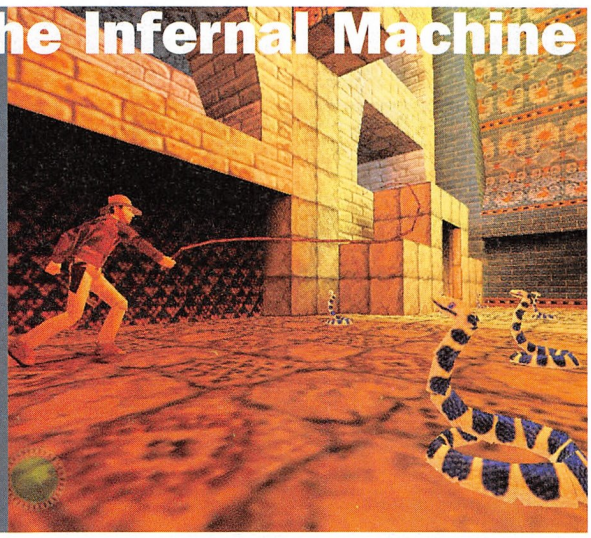
Welcome to Napster, the future of music. Napster is the best search engine available, and the best way for users to find and download MP3s. By creating a virtual community, Napster ensures a vast collection of MP3s for download. Napster also eliminates the problems of conventional FTP transferring by using cutting-edge technology to ensure the completion of each MP3 transfer. Napster searches every online library for songs - you can specify the minimum ping times, bit-rates and frequency. Never again deal with tied up sites or dead links. This is one awesome tool.

### Paintshop Pro

Paint Shop Pro is an award-winning image-editing tool that offers a robust set of painting and drawing tools and support for more than 40 image formats. Features include dockable toolbars, built-in special effects filters, RGB colour separation, masking options, multi-level undo functionality, complete layer support, "picture tube" brushes, CMYK separation, pressure-sensitive tablet support, flexible painting and retouching brushes, and adjustable cropping and selection tools. It is just as good as Adobe Photoshop and much, much cheaper.

REVIEWED P68

## Indiana Jones & the Infernal Machine



**Category:** Action/Adventure
**Developer:** Lucas Arts
**Need:** P200, 32MB RAM, W95/98, 3D Card

■ Sure, he may not look nearly as good in a slinky cocktail dress, but before Lara Croft arrived on the scene, everybody's favourite action archaeologist was the adventurer/scientist/ladies' man Indiana Jones. Ever since Raiders of the Lost Ark, Indy has made archaeology look utterly cool. This time round it's 1947 and the Nazis have been crushed. The Cold War has begun and Soviet agents are sniffing around the ruins of the fabled Tower of Babel. What are they up to? The CIA wants renowned archaeologist and adventurer Dr. Henry "Indiana" Jones, Jr. to find out. Grab your whip and fedora and join Indy in globe-spanning race to unearth the mysterious "Infernal Machine."

► Players control the heroine Cyra as she hoverboards through futuristic cities and arenas. Gameplay is based on using ramps and tricks to build velocity and avoid opponents' shots. Using a chase-cam and customisable mouse/keyboard interface, G-Sector should be familiar to players of the 3D shooter genre.

### HOT WHEELS Crash!

**Category:** Racing
**Developer:** Mattel
**Need:** P166, 32MB RAM, W95/98

■ Unlike conventional car games this isn't about racing or beating the best track times. No, for as the name suggests this title is concentrated solely on the lovely sport of smashing your car into hundreds of pieces. All you have to do is steer your truck down the steep slope and try to cause the most outrageous 3D crashes possible. The wilder the stunt crashes the more points you gain. Thanks to the magic of computer gaming, a safety belt is not required.

### Jetboat Superchamps

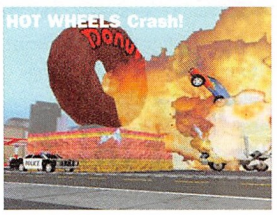
**Category:** Racing
**Developer:** Fiendish Games
**Need:** P233, 32MB RAM, W95/98, 3D Card

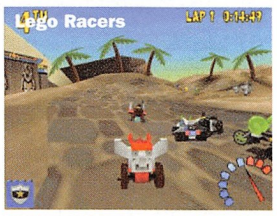
■ Take to the water as one of the Superchamps and prove you can compete with the best aqua racers in the world! Get to grips with this Manga style Jetboat racer and you'll discover a host of hidden features on your quest for the chequered flag. Stunning 3D-accelerated graphics with incredible water effects and three unique environments to race in challenges the most dedicated racer and the most hardened of gamers. This demo lets you race four laps of the Aqua Marine course.

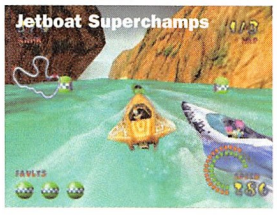
### Lego Racers

**Category:** Racing
**Developer:** Lego Media
**Need:** P166, 32MB RAM, W95/98, 3D Card

■ Lego Racers combines all the fun of LEGO building blocks and fast-paced cart racing! The object of Lego Racers is to build an absolutely amazing vehicle out of an infinite supply of bricks and parts and then put your creation to the test in a wild and wacky race. To further enhance the experience, there's an assortment of weapons and power-ups for you to enjoy. Who says racing has to be a fair sport? And best of all you may return to the garage at any point and construct a new car, or just make general modifications.



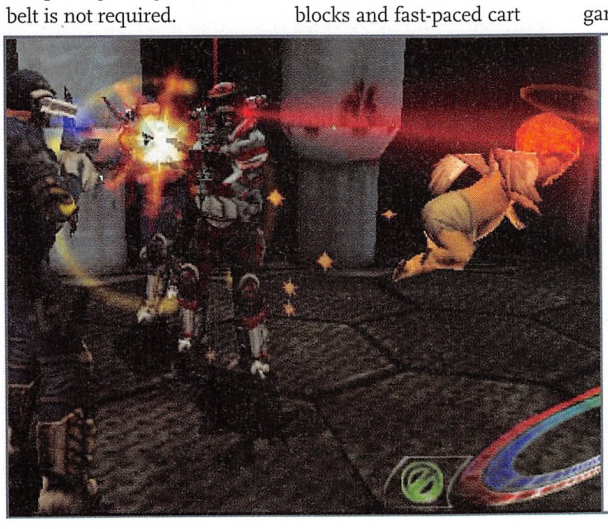




### Spellbinder

**Category:** RPG
**Developer:** Mythic Entertainment
**Need:** P200, 32MB RAM, W95/98, 3D Card

■ Mythic's arena-based game of magical combat takes the genre to a whole new level. With classes and spells right out of the popular Rolemaster tabletop role-playing game system from Iron Crown Enterprises, Spellbinder features ultra-high-quality graphics and new, exciting match play options. You can choose to be the Magician, skilled in the arts of magic; the Mystic, who specialises in hiding and surprise attacks; the Healer, a non-offensive magic-user who can't fight but can make everyone around him more effective; or the Runemage, a powerful master of traps. The choice is yours.



## Messiah

**Category:** Action
**Developer:** Interplay
**Need:** P233, 64MB RAM, W95/98, 3D Card

■ Bob is an angel ordered by God to go and clean up the putrid, disgusting, sleazy, and infested world of the future. He has been given the power of possession so that he can sneak up on any living creature and leap right into their soul! With your help, Bob can then use their bodies, their weapons, or even their bare hands to strangle, cripple, impale, and incinerate the cities of sinners sent to stop you from finding Satan himself. Hiding in their souls, Bob can use these sinners' bodies against their will, as a shield or even pretend to be just another twisted citizen in the Messiah world. The rules are up to you...

### Soul Reaver

**Category:** Action/Adventure
**Developer:** Eidos Interactive
**Need:** P166, 32MB RAM, W95/98

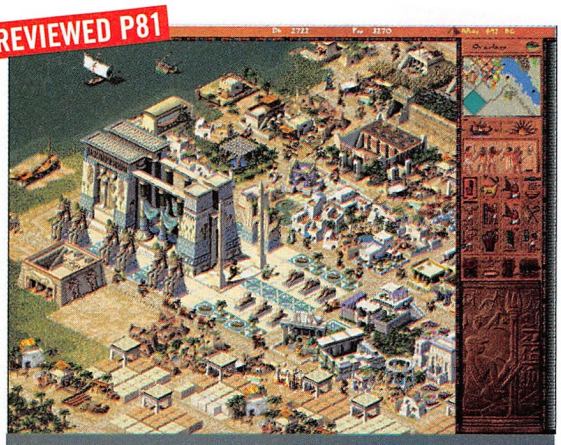
■ As Raziel, you must stalk the world of Nosgoth, feeding upon the souls of your enemies as you seek to destroy your creator Kain. You must battle vampire clans as you explore a dangerous 3D world tainted by a vampire dynasty's rule. You'll engage in deadly hand-to-hand combat as you make full use of weapons, acquired spells, and the surrounding environment. The game features real-time environment morphing as you shift between the material and spectral realms, complex puzzles, a grim gothic story, and more. This is an updated version of the demo.

### Tyrian 2000

**Category:** Old-school Action
**Developer:** Eclipse Software
**Need:** P100, 32MB RAM, W95/98

■ Tyrian was a great blaster back in the days of VGA graphics and two-button joysticks, giving gamers a much-needed dose of arcade style vertically scrolling shooting. It still plays well even to this day, but it's good to see that it's been given a new lease of life in this fast paced sequel. Basically this is more of the same - while that's a kiss of death cliche for many sequels, in Tyrian's case it's a blessing. All you need to worry about is turning the lights off, the sound up and getting your name up on the high score table.

REVIEWED P81



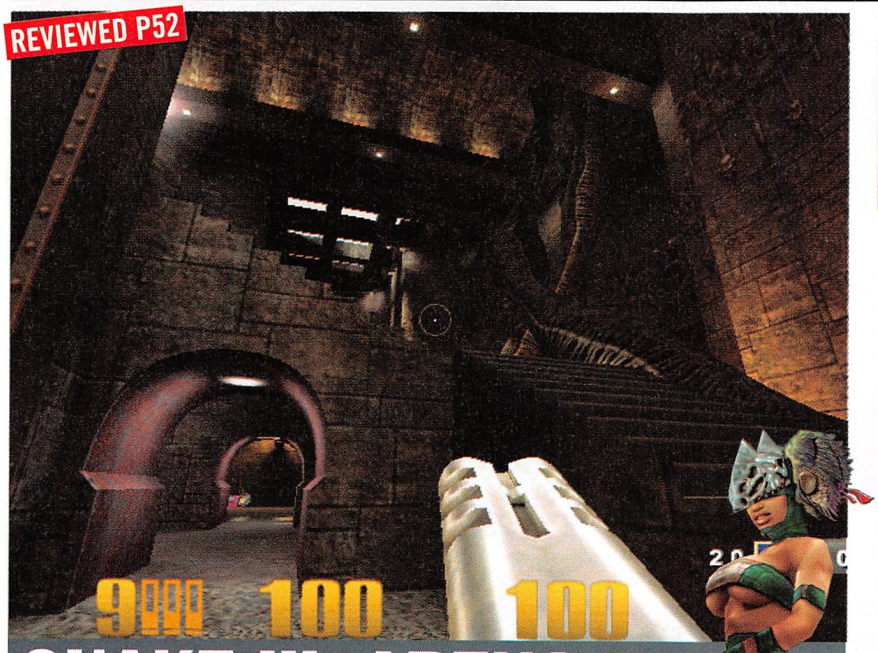
## Pharaoh

**Category:** Real-time Strategy
**Developer:** Sierra
**Need:** P166, 32MB RAM, W95/98

■ Welcome to ancient Egypt, the land of Pharaoh. Preparations are underway for your arrival. Under your leadership, thriving cities will be built, great pyramids will stretch toward the sky and great armies and navies will bow to your command. Great honour awaits you. Build some of the greatest monuments ever known, including the Great Pyramids, the Sphinx and the Temple of Luxor. Build Carpentry lodges, Bricklayer lodges and Stonemason lodges to construct these massive edifices block by block.

# DISC 2

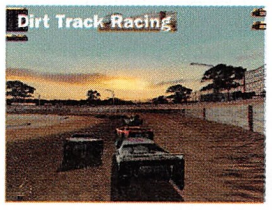
REVIEWED P52




## QUAKE III: ARENA

**Category:** First-person Shooter
**Developer:** id Software
**Need:** P90, 16MB RAM, W95/98, 3D Card

■ With the introduction of Wolfenstein, id Software gave birth to a whole new gaming genre. The following title, Doom, shook the industry to its very roots and proved what games could really do on the PC and what they could really sell. They could do 3D and they could sell millions. From then on id went from strength to strength, culminating in the awe-inspiring Quake and the cutting-edge Quake II sequel. What more can id do to push the first-person shooter forward? id's answer is to reincarnate the multi-player game as we know it and thus Quake III: Arena is born. Now it's time to witness a new milestone in PC gaming...




### Dirt Track Racing

**Category:** Driving Sim
**Developer:** Ratbag
**Need:** P200, 32MB RAM, W95/98, 3D Card

■ DTR is a simulation racing game. DTR will capture the exact experience of competition, including realistic physics simulation, tuning/upgrading vehicles and progression through various series from hobby stock to late model class. Possibly the most important feature is the very tight racing. In a field of 16 cars every single car uses the same physics engine with over 100 parameters for each car. This means that all the other cars race right along side you. This results in incredibly tight racing around short circuits, jockeying for position in a pack of vehicles - never seen before in a game.

# UTILITIES

### UltraEdit

A great text editor with almost every feature you could want. Some of its many features include: disk-based text editing, no limit on file size, minimum RAM used even for multi-megabyte files, column mode editing, insert columns delete/cut/add sequential numbers, 100,000 word spell checker, syntax highlighting, configurable, pre-configured for C/C++ and VB and some HTML.

### Webshots Desktop

Webshots Desktop includes more than 2,000 full-screen colour images in categories such as sports, scenics, wildlife, travel, 3D, and more. These photos are used as your desktop wallpaper and screensaver via the Webshots Desktop software. The software includes an automatic Web connection that downloads new photos each day. You can also add your own images into the software and share photos with friends and family through the Webshots community.

### Winamp

Winamp plays MPEG Layer 2 (MP2) and Layer 3 (MP3) audio streams, and combines extensive functionality with an intuitive interface. It has a full-featured playlist editor and a 10-band graphic equaliser with user-definable presets that can automatically load specific files. It now features Windows Media Technology 4.0 input/output support and the industry-standard Fraunhofer MP3 decoder. Version 2.50e features increased useability, improved Mjuice support, numerous bug fixes, and more. It's one of the best sound programs available.

### WinMorph

WinMorph lets you create a digital movie showing one image warping and morphing into another. With WinMorph, you can create professional morphing sequences with little effort. The program warps individual images and creates digital movies (in AVI format) or saved image sequences by morphing between frames. You can also rotate, resize, and twist images for custom effects. It comes with a built-in AVI viewer. This latest release allows movies to be saved in MPEG or AVI format. Colour quantisation has been improved, which enables saving of all movies and frames in true colour so that editing using an external video editor is simpler.

# UTILITIES

### Winzip

WinZip is a straightforward zipping and unzipping utility that includes built-in support for popular Internet file formats such as TAR, ZIP, UUencode, XXencode, BinHex, MIME, and Unix-compressed files. ARJ, LZH, and ARC files are supported via external programs. An optional wizard simplifies unzipping and installing software in ZIP files. New features in WinZip 7.0 include the ability to create self-extracting files that span multiple disks, the ability to print a list of files in a ZIP, sizeable and sortable columns in the main window, easier configuration and lots more.

### X-Setup

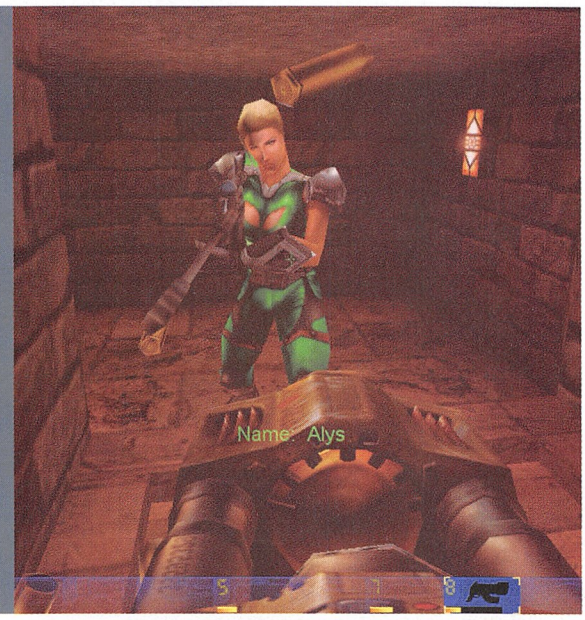
From simple boot options up to server settings, X-Setup allows you to change more than 300 hidden functions with some simple button clicks. Some topics X-Setup covers: Windows, Internet Explorer, Office, Explorer options, Server options, Network settings and Security. X-Setup offers wizards that allow you to change your system in a step-by-step process. With this feature, configuring your system is as easy as A-B-C. Also, it has an Explorer-like layout and the famous back and next buttons you already know from your Internet browser so navigation can't be easier.

REVIEWED P60

## UNREAL TOURNAMENT

**Category:** First-person Shooter
**Developer:** GT Interactive
**Need:** P200, 32MB RAM, W95/98, 3D Card

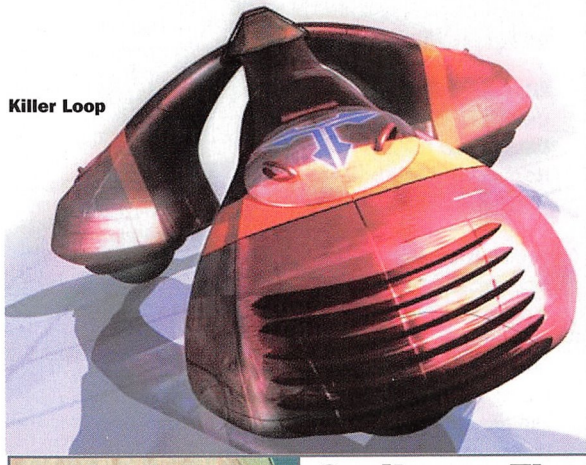
■ Unreal Tournament is a stand-alone (e.g. you don't need the first Unreal to play it) game that provides the ultimate in multiplayer excitement whether you're hooked up the internet or not. Let's repeat: Unreal Tournament kicks just as much butt whether you're playing by yourself or on the Internet. Unreal Tournament's got it all: a ton of amazing levels, kick-ass new weapons, brain-melting new modes of play (Capture the Flag, Assault Match, Domination Match, Last Man Standing and, of course, Deathmatch!), unbelievably deadly bots (computer controlled opponents or team mates), and a slew of other features bound to have your happiness glands working overtime!




## Killer Loops

**Category:** Racing
**Developer:** VCC Entertainment
**Need:** P166, 16MB RAM

■ Welcome to the 22nd century. In this century mankind has surpassed all expectations. With disease now eliminated and all wars ended, the population of Earth is stable. In this age people seek new challenges. The Magneto-Kinetic League (MKL) has evolved a new sport for a new age. Driving magnetically driven Tripods, the top pilots battle time, gravity, and their competitors for the trophy. With new, increasingly challenging raceways, constantly under construction, this is a sport where pilots do battle with architects. As you advance through the raceways and your driver skills evolve, so will your Tripod. It's driver and machine evolution!



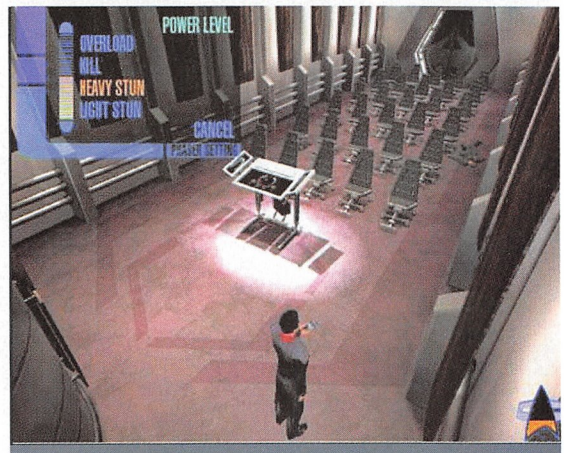
Killer Loop

## Phoenix

**Category:** Space Combat
**Developer:** Hasbro Interactive
**Need:** P2-266, 64MB RAM, W95/98

■ The world of Phoenix is harsh, brooding, and paranoid. It is not populated with heroes and villains, but with real people. These people are scarred by their histories, and they all have their own inner demons and their own ways of dealing with

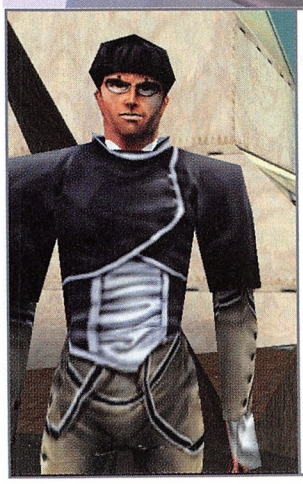



## Omikron: The Nomad Soul

**Category:** Action/Adventure
**Developer:** Quantic Dream
**Need:** P2-200, 64MB RAM, W95/98

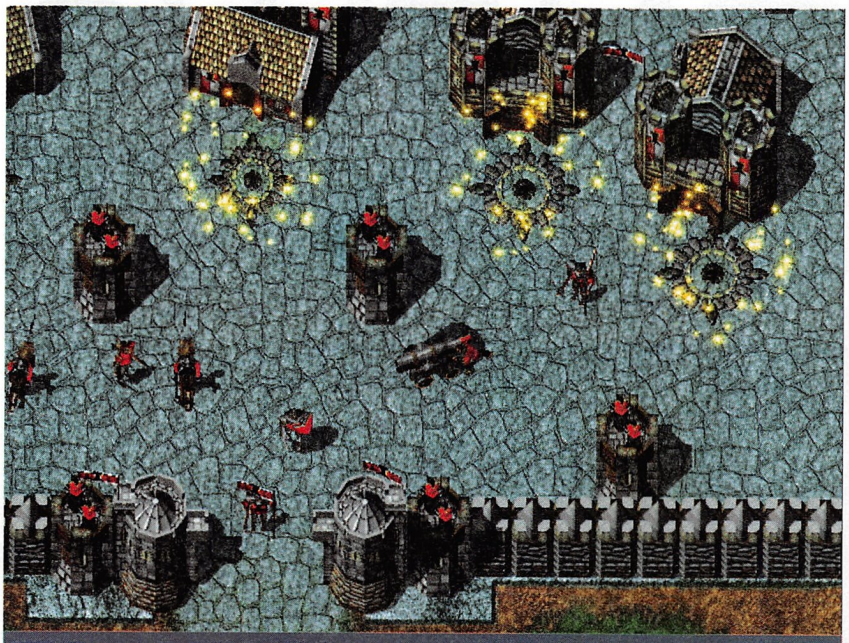
■ Deathless, you must wander the strange streets of this place searching for answers. Within the mystery of your fate lies the fate of the city. Only by mastering this maze-like alternate universe and doing battle with evil can you resurrect the ancient forces of good to free your nomad soul. The demo contains the area of Anekbah, a sampling of the story, and some of the basic features of the game. Explore Anekbah as much as you like. You can find the shooting gallery; tone your fighting skills; and visit shops, restaurants, banks, and more.



## Star Trek: Hidden Evil

**Category:** Adventure
**Developer:** Activision
**Need:** P200, 32MB RAM, W95/98

■ Plunged into the wake of the events following Star Trek: Insurrection, you find yourself embroiled in a plot to harness the destructive powers of a coveted genetic seed. You must engage alien forces and outwit your foes in a series of challenging missions or else the Federation will fall victim to its ruthless arch-enemy. You can explore a mysterious, ancient Star Trek civilisation, take on foes with deadly weapons such as phasers and - for the first time ever - the Vulcan Nerve Pinch. You'll follow orders from Captain Picard, using your Tricorder and Communicator to gather helpful facts in an adventure of stealth and combat.



# TA: Kingdoms

**Category:** Real-time Strategy
**Developer:** GT Interactive
**Need:** P200, 32MB RAM, W95/98

■ Massive armies will clash. Forests and cities will burn. Tremendous magical forces will level entire fortresses in the blink of an eye. Four completely unique races are vying for control of the mythical world of Darien, each representing one of the four elements — Earth and Air, Fire and Water. You'll take the role of one of the four immortal monarchs of these nations at war. You'll rally your legions of swordsmen, archers, and knights on horseback to fight under your flag. Wizards, beasts, and even flame-spewing demons will heed your every command, waging war on an epic field of battle.

them. Everyone is carried along by the fiendishly convoluted plot as it twists and turns its way towards a seemingly inevitable disaster. Set in the middle of the new millennium, you take the role of Beck, a police officer. Beck, through a tragic quirk of fate, finds himself reluctantly thrust into the role of hero. Challenged by a wide variety of different missions, the route you take through the game will vary depending on your skill.

### Slave Zero

**Category:** 3D Shooter
**Developer:** Accolade
**Need:** P2-266, 32MB RAM, W95/98, 3D Card

■ Rampage through a bustling future metropolis in a stolen sixty-foot attack robot. Slave Zero takes place in an enormous, 7 mile-high mega-city, populated with millions of people, automobiles and aircraft. Engage in intense, action-filled combat against enemies of all sizes and shapes, ranging from human-sized troops and tanks to 200-foot tall behemoths.



REVIEWED P64

# The Wheel of Time

**Category:** First-person Shooter
**Developer:** GT Interactive
**Need:** P2-266, 64MB RAM, W95/98

■ The Wheel of Time, based on the best-selling fantasy series of novels by Robert Jordan, is set to revolutionise the world of PC gaming through its unique mix of action, strategy and role-playing. Using an enhanced version of Epic MegaGames' Unreal engine, WoT will bring Jordan's vibrant world of fantasy and intrigue to life. To put it simply, your mind will have to be just as quick as your trigger finger if you're to successfully gather the keys to the Dark One's magical prison.







### Urban Chaos

**Category:** Action/Adventure
**Developer:** Eidos Interactive
**Need:** P233, 32MB RAM, W95/98, 3D Card

■ The year is 1999, just at the turn of the millennium. Turmoil, war, and famine rule. In the major cities of the world, chaos is rampant. Crooks, thieves, terrorists and violent cults lurk around every corner. It is up to you to enter into the tattered remains of this city and try to bring order. You can enter the world as one of two characters: D'arci is a cop trying to prove her mettle; Roper is a vigilante dedicated to thwarting the efforts of a religious cult. Either one could be the hero this city is waiting for.

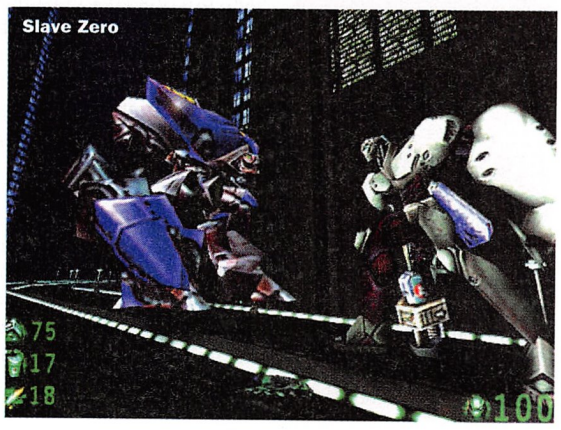
LATEST

## Patches

Abomination 2.6.4
Age Of Wonders 1.1
Drakan 4.44
Freespace 2 v1.20
Homeworld v1.04
Indiana Jones & the Infernal Machine
Rogue Spear 2.05
Soul Reaver 1.2
Spec Ops 2 v1.1.1
Ultima IX Ascension v1.05f
Drakan Nude Patch

## Extra!

**Slave Zero MP3s**



# GAMENEWS

**HEADLINES:** Local Gaming Conference • Matrix Game • Microsoft X-Box rumours Republic: The Revolution • Rogue Spear Add-on • Microprose R.I.P • TA: Dungeons

## SIDELINES

With **Spec Ops 2** only just on the shelves (see our review next month), Ripcord have announced details of a third game in the series. Ditching the Army Ranger theme of the previous games, **Spec Ops 3** will instead place you in the role of a team of Navy SEALs. This should mean for greater variety in mission locations, perhaps even some underwater sorties. **Spec Ops 3** will use the Lithtech engine and is scheduled for a late 2000 release.

Flushed with the success of **Omikron: The Nomad Soul**, Paris-based developers Quantic Dream have revealed plans to begin work on a sequel. **The Nomad Soul**'s celebrated cinematic experience is set to be expanded upon, though as development has barely started exact details are scarce. We can report, however, that David Bowie has again been approached to contribute to the game's musical and - dare we say - artistic vision.

Eidos have officially announced that they have bought a majority shareholding in troubled development team ION Storm. This completes a year of investments for the UK publisher, including Elixir Studios (responsible for Republic) and Timeline Studios (the Michael Crichton backed developer). Speaking of ION Storm, at the time of print it was rumoured that Eidos had first rejected a final build of **Daikatana** then requested a release candidate within 24 hours. If John Romero and co failed to comply, the infamous first-person shooter would certainly miss its expected pre-Christmas release.

A survey has revealed that consoles will dominate the online gaming market within five years, thanks to the Dreamcast, Playstation 2 and Nintendo's next system. According to Datamonitor, who conducted the research, an estimated nearly 30 million gamers in Europe and the US will play online on the PCs. This compares to a quite astounding 45 million anticipated online console gamers. It's no wonder Microsoft is reputedly gearing up for entry into the console market with their X-Box.

Ratbag's Dirt Track Racing is sure to repeat its overseas success when it's released here in February.




# AGDC REPORT:
## The local industry comes of age

In late November the local games industry converged on the Millennium Hotel in Sydney to attend the inaugural Australian Game Developers Conference. With representatives from local game developers and distributors, print and online media, as well as a number of overseas guests, approximately 250 people participated in the speeches and debates that proved the highlight of the three-day event.

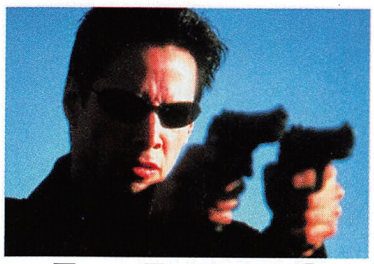
The keynote address from Intel duo, Karl Rodrigues and Kim Pallister, was less than revelatory about the hotly-tipped X-Box console from Microsoft, with both offering an ambiguous "no comment" upon its rumoured existence. Elsewhere, the talks from developers such as Ratbag, MicroForte and Primal Clarity provided the perfect example of the future potential of the talented local industry. Greg Siegle from Adelaide's Ratbag Software boasted of how the recent US release of their Dirt Track Racing (it's been delayed until February here) sold out its initial shipment of 50,000 in a mere two days.

The new head of Electronic Arts' development studio on the Gold Coast, Steve Dauterman, outlined the plans his company has to meet the expectations of the Australian market. The former Lucasarts producer explained how EA will increase staff numbers on the team by up to 30 this year, with an intended goal of over 100 full-time staff in a couple of years time. Sports titles, such as AFL, Cricket and Rugby are an obvious and immediate priority.

Perhaps the most interesting announcement came from MicroForte's John De Margheriti concerning his company's relationship with the newly-formed Academy of Interactive Entertainment. A joint venture between the Canberra Institute of Technology and MicroForte, the Academy's aim is to give budding game programmers and artists the skills necessary to start up their own development teams upon graduation. For more information see http://www.aie.act.edu.au.

Also announced was the establishment of the Australian Game Developers' Association to represent the interests of the local industry. "For too long the big contribution our industry makes to the Australian economy and to games development internationally has gone largely unrecognised by Australian governments and by the Australian public," said the AGDA's president, Adam Lancman from Infogrames Melbourne House. "I am determined to make sure that this new Association strongly represents the interests of the industry so we can ensure our sector continues to prosper."

We wish them and next year's AGDC all the best.



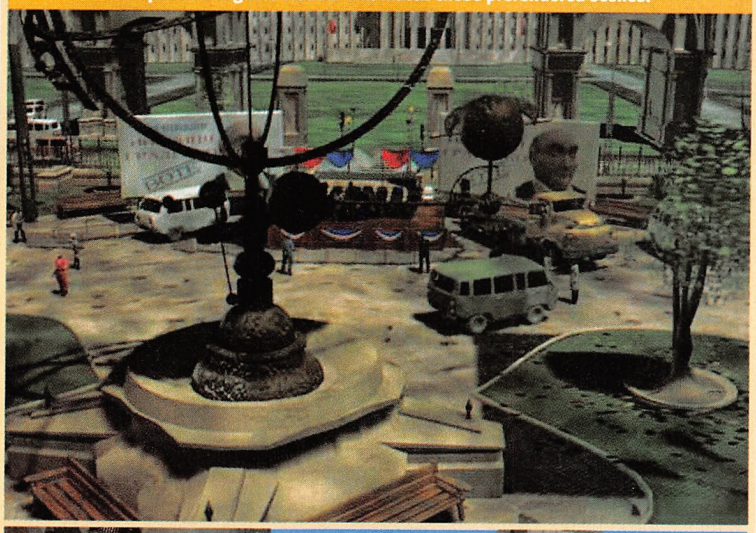
# A NEO GAME?

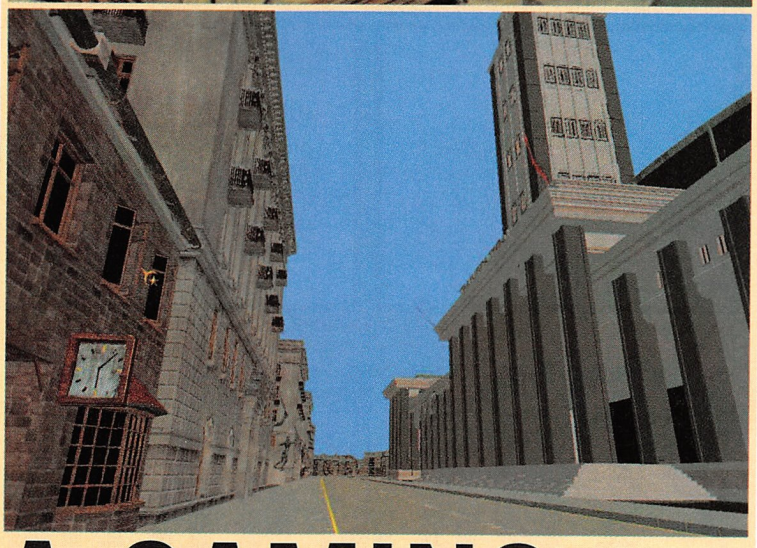
Rare are the films - especially action flicks - that get released today without the promise of a computer or video game tie-in. It's remarkable, therefore, to note that little has been heard of any game publisher or developer obtaining the license to the hottest film of recent years, The Matrix. However, in an online chat late last year, the directors, the Wachowski brothers, let slip that a game was being planned, hopefully to coincide with the cinema release of the Matrix sequel and to be developed simultaneously with the movie, so that they resemble each other to a certain extent. Current rumours suggest that either Shiny (Messiah) or Konami's Metal Gear Solid team are favoured to get the conversion job, but we're putting our money on Ritual (Sin). Call it a hunch.

# PROJECT X

For months now, expectation has been rising regarding an official confirmation of Microsoft's purported PC-based games console, codenamed X-Box. Sources had been predicting an announcement at November's Comdex gathering in the US, but to no avail. Now it's alleged that January is the date and the Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas is the venue for the really this time official word from Bill Gates himself. The mystery surrounding the announcement has only encouraged speculation as to what the final product will consist of. The current belief is that it will feature a 500MHz Intel processor, utilise nVidia's GeForce graphics chip, support DVD technology and ship with a built-in modem. Obviously, we'll keep you abreast of future developments.

Elixir boasts Republic's ingame visuals will match these prerendered scenes.



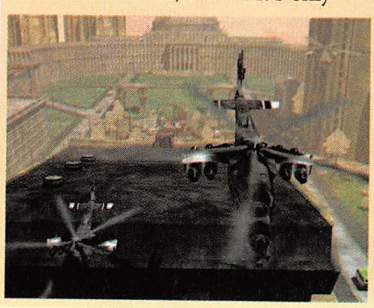


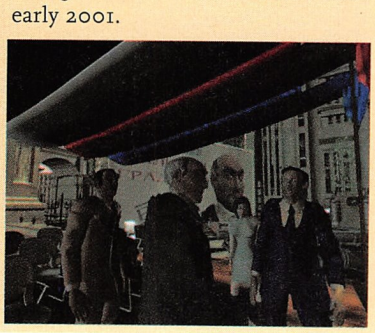
# A GAMING REVOLUTION

Easily the most stunning new game announcement this month came from little-known UK development team Elixir Studios. Their first game is called Republic: The Revolution and it is in all probability the most ambitious game we've ever encountered. They've produced a demo to showcase the kind of jaw-dropping technology with which the game will be created. It's a cityscape depicting 10,000 buildings, each one consisting of ten million polygons - which is, by our calculation, a staggering 100 billion polygons on screen at once. Phenomenal stuff, even if it's only some smoke and mirrors trick.

The actual game is a presidential simulator that's part god-sim and part political strategy. You begin as a lowly provincial mayor, but with success will work your way up the political food-chain to become president of the fictional Eastern European nation of Novistrana. The capital city will allegedly boast a population of one million unique citizens.

Elixir Studios was founded by Demis Hassabis, who designed Theme Park while still a teenager at former employers, Bullfrog. His new game isn't due for release until early 2001.





# SIDELINES

Another Sierra game has bitten the dust. **Tribes Extreme**, the vaunted single player expansion to **Starsiege Tribes** has been canned, though the decision is unrelated to the recent shake-up at Sierra. According to a Dynamix spokesperson, the development on Extreme was holding back work on **Tribes 2**, so it was thought best to concentrate resources on the more important sequel. Some of the planned content for Extreme will appear for free on the internet in the coming weeks and months.

Unfinished Business is the name of the forthcoming add-on for **Jagged Alliance 2**. The 1st quarter release will see the addition of ten characters and weapons, twenty new areas to explore, and several gameplay tweaks. Pleasingly, it will be possible to import any **JA2** save game.

We liked **Disciples** a lot when we perused its excursion into fantasy-flavoured strategy a few months back (81% PCPP#43). **Disciples 2000** is the oddly-named sequel that will be available some time later this year. Oddly-named because it doesn't take place in the year 2000, but rather returns to the world of elves and orcs where the original game occurred. More of everything is promised, as per usual. Which is nice.

Cavedog's solid, if uninspiring, **Total Annihilation: Kingdoms** has met with sufficient success to spawn an expansion pack. Dubbed **The Iron Plague**, the add-on complicates the original's quartet of elemental races by adding a fifth, the technology-based Creon, to the world of Darien. New single and multi-player maps are promised, as well as access to an online realm at Boneyards called the **Darien Crusades**.

A second game based on **The Blair Witch Project** has been confirmed by Gathering of Developers. Human Head, the creators of the upcoming **Rune**, is the team chosen to code the second in what will be a trilogy of Blair Witch themed titles. As with the Terminal Reality game, Human Head will also utilise the **Nocturne** game engine, dispelling rumours that the **Unreal** engine would be used.

**Throne of Darkness** has been on a bit of a rollercoaster ride recently. The **Diablo**-esque RPG under development by some ex-Blizzard guys at Click Entertainment was dropped by Acclaim late last year, and the future of the delayed project appeared in jeopardy. Only a week later, however, and Click were announcing that Sierra had agreed to publishing rights. We would expect to see the game delayed until at least the middle of the year to allow Sierra to get **Diablo II** out the door first.

## SIDELINES

**Indiana Jones and the Infernal Machine** may have disappointed many Lucasarts fans but it does offer a glimpse of what could be in the pipeline. By pressing F10, typing "makemeapirate" and pressing Enter, Indy becomes a 3D Guybrush! Rumour has it that there's a hidden 3D Barbery Coast to explore in the game too. Add to this the fact that Lucasarts have been hinting heavily in certain circles that a **Monkey Island** sequel is definitely a possibility and it's a safe bet that **The Secret of Monkey Island 4** will be the next Lucasarts adventure. Let's just hope it can deliver a little better than the **Infernal Machine**...

**IN BRIEF**

* GT Interactive have informed us that the locally developed realtime strategy game **Wartorn** has been delayed until March 2000. This is to allow overseas publishers Virgin to coordinate a simultaneous worldwide release.

* **Diablo II** has been delayed yet again. A Blizzard spokesperson has cited the huge complexity of the game and the logistics of setting up enough localised Battle.net servers as the main reasons for the delay. The game should have entered its beta test by the time you read this.

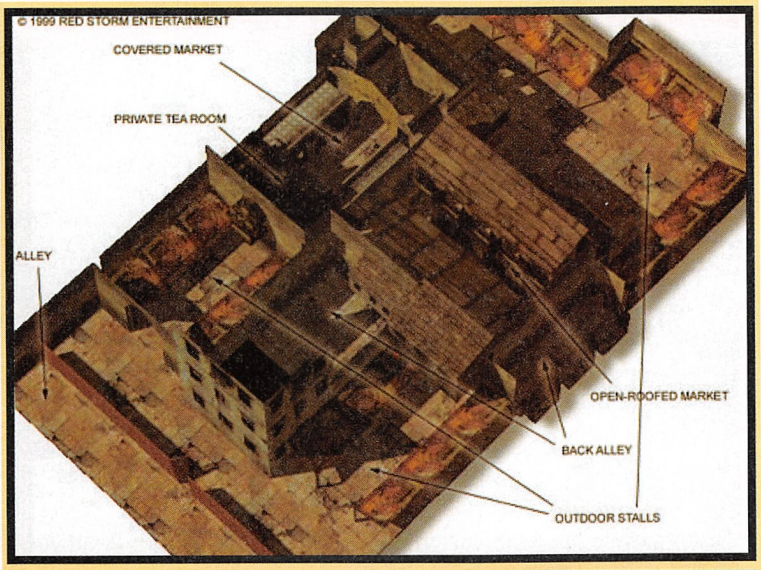
* Y2K may have come and gone, but it hasn't prevented Interplay feeding into the zeitgeist furhter with their latest adventure game. Shockingly titled **Y2K**, it describes the tale of a mansion's high-tech security system turning on its unfortunate owner.

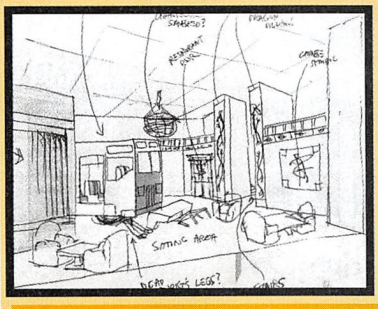
* After **Opposing Force** (see review on p66), it's rumoured that another **Half-Life** is in development. The alleged makers are 2015, who were responsible for the **Sin** expansion, **Wages of Sin**.

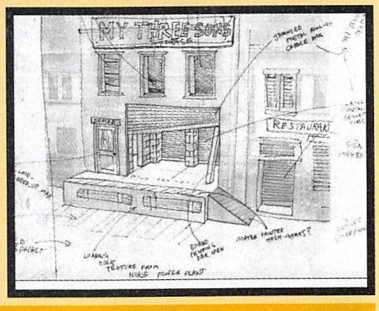
• After putting the final touches to their Horny **Quake 3** model, Bullfrog are apparently busying themselves with early work on yet another iteration of their massive-selling **Dungeon Keeper** series.

• Word has been doing the rounds for a little while that Lucasarts and Verant (**Everquest**) are discussing the possibility of an online-only Star Wars game. In related news, pen and paper RPG specialists Wizards of the Coast have snapped up the rights to future Star Wars role-playing titles, meaning a computer conversion could well be on the cards down the track.

• Planet Moon's long-awaited **Giants** has hit further snags. Concerned that a late 1999 release would see the predominately multiplayer title passed over in favour of **Quake 3** and **Unreal Tournament**, Interplay decided to hold off the launch until early this year. Expect it around April.



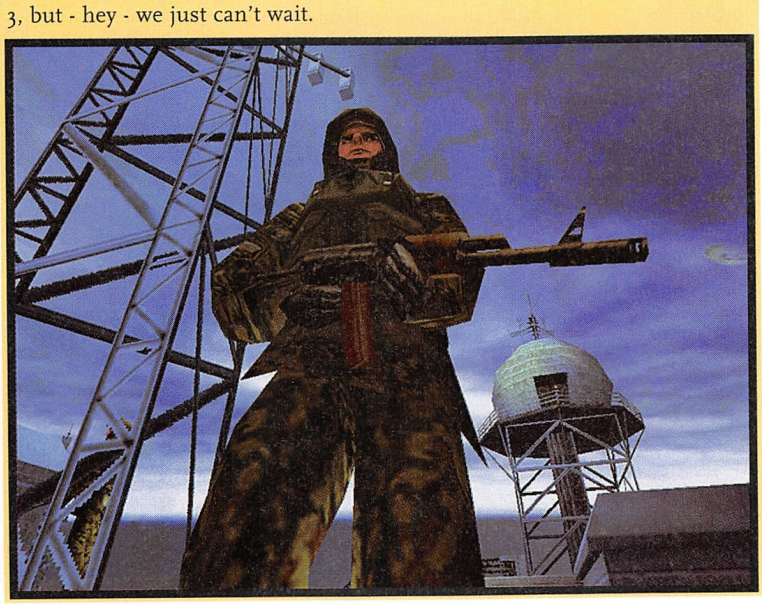





A glimpse of Urban Ops still in the concept phase. They make a game out of that mess?

# URBAN EXPANSION

Rogue Spear is the epitome of the thinking man's shooter. Painstaking strategy and acute tactical acumen are far more important than scratching that itch on your trigger finger. Which is partly why we love it so much. The other reason is that we know how nice the people are at Red Storm, and how quickly they would get around to releasing an expansion pack for Rogue Spear. And here it is. Urban Operations claims a clutch of famous cities where all manner of extremely tense hostage situations will be played out. New weapons and multiplayer maps feature strongly, while a selection of original Rainbow Six levels will be reprised to complete the package. Cynics may suggest that the more urban environments are a spoiling tactic against Sierra's imminent SWAT 3, but - hey - we just can't wait.






# MICROPROSE R.I.P

It seems that the Microprose we all know and (mostly) love is now no more. In a shock move, Hasbro has cut over 2,000 employees and shut down two of its development houses in the US. However, the Microprose name will remain on some established series' such as Civilization, Gunship and X-Com, but the decision has signalled a change of direction for many future products. A Hasbro spokesperson has revealed plans to abandon high-end simulations, meaning sophisticated games like Falcon will no longer find release. Instead they plan to concentrate more on mainstream titles. Though many gamers will be saddened by the demise of the old Microprose, business sense inevitably dictates. The reality is that while the accessible Rollercoaster Tycoon has spent most of the year riding high in the charts, Falcon 4 pretty much disappeared from the radar as soon as it hit the shelves.




# TA: DUNGEONS

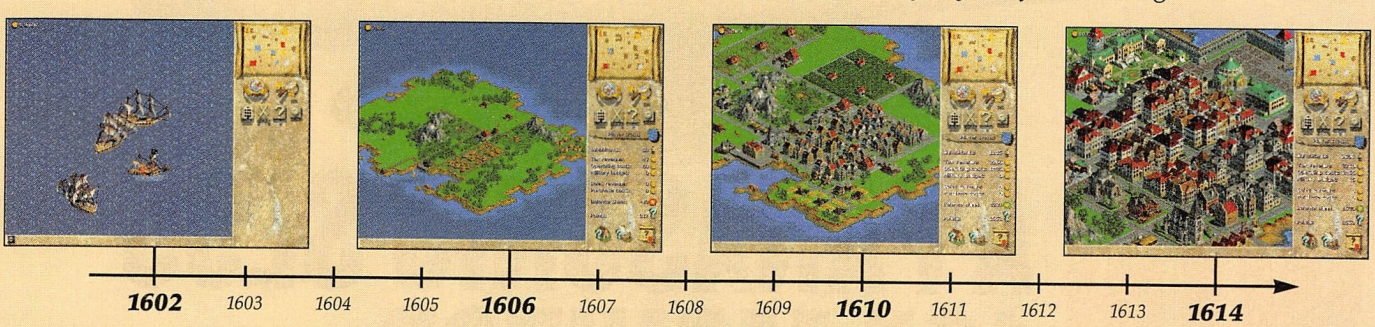
After effecting a revolution in realtime strategy, Total Annihilation creator Chris Taylor left Cavedog to set up his own development studio. Now, Gas Powered Games, as Taylor's new team is called, is ready to let the world know about its first game, Dungeon Siege. Though essentially a fantasy role-playing game, it's clear that Taylor's RTS legacy will live on through the title. The action - for this is definitely role-playing in the Diablo sense of the genre - takes place in a realtime 3D world (thanks to the cunningly titled Siege engine), while the player is granted the freedom to tackle the main quest alone or in a party of multiple characters. With this and Legion (see PCPP#43), it certainly seems like Warcraft 3 will have some stiff competition come the end of the year. Microsoft will publish Dungeon Siege in late 2000.

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# GAME ~of the~ YEAR 1999

PCPP PC POWERPLAY GAME ~of the~ YEAR

## Opinions, eh?

You buy PC PowerPlay to read ours every month of the year. But the thing about opinions is that everyone has got one. Especially when it comes to games. And, of course, the most important opinions come from the people who actually buy those games - YOU. So, here's your chance to tell us what you thought were the best games of 1999.

Yes, the celebrated PCPP GOTY Awards is back and bigger than ever - well, it's one page bigger at least. Helpfully provided to you over on the page opposite (and over the page) is a voting form detailing all the voting categories and their respective nominees. Fill it out, tear it out, then pop it in an envelope and post it to us. Australia Post has been placed on full alert to cope with the inevitable deluge of mail entries. Don't delay!

## How to Vote:

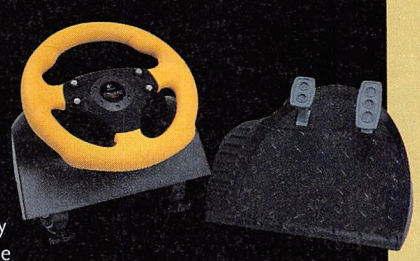
The Game of the Year awards cover the period from November 1998 to December 1999. Yes, we know that's actually fourteen months, but it was thought to be best for all concerned if the awards were brought into line with the calendar year. A sensible decision, we're sure you'll agree. All this means is that any game released before the end of this year is now eligible to be voted for. Indeed, the voting form will be updated next month to include all the big Christmas releases.

Closing date for all entries is February 9th and the winners will be announced in the April issue.

Send your voting form to:

**PC PowerPlay**
**GOTY**
**Level 6,**
**418a Elizabeth St**
**Surry Hills, NSW 2010**

## WIN!



As if further incentive were needed, one lucky GOTY voter will have his or her efforts well rewarded with a couple of select gaming peripherals kindly donated by Logitech. There's the Logitech WingMan Formula steering wheel (valued at $199), which we reviewed last issue, giving it a hearty thumbs up in the process - it's Ferrari yellow, has proper gear levers, and thus is the best steering wheel around. There's also the Logitech WingMan Extreme Digital 3D joystick, which is reviewed in this very issue!

The prize winner will be drawn at random from all the votes we've received by the closing date.

### ONLINE VOTING

Of course, we fully understand that you might prefer not to rip a page from your favourite games mag. For your convenience, then, we've arranged a handy online voting form at our sister website, Hyper@ctive. Simply direct your browser to ***www.hyperactive.com*** and follow the appropriate link. The environmentally-friendly way to vote!

# GAME • of the • YEAR

## VOTING FORM LIFTOUT

**HOW TO VOTE:**
From the nominees listed, please write your pick for the winner in the space provided below each category. You don't need to vote in every category to be eligible for the prize.
Send entries to:
**G.O.T.Y, PC PowerPlay, Level 6, 418a Elizabeth St**
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**Starcraft: last year's overall winner and best RTS**

## BEST GAME OF 1999

### BEST INTRO

### BEST MUSIC

### BEST SOUND FX

### BEST GRAPHICS

### BEST STORYLINE

### BEST INTERFACE

### BEST ENEMY

### MOST ORIGINAL GAME

### MOST IMPRESSIVE AI

### FIRST-PERSON SHOOTER (SINGLE PLAYER)

**Nominees:**
Aliens vs Predator
Blood 2
Deer Hunter 2
Half-Life
Kingpin
Klingon Honor Guard
Redline
Redneck Deer Hunting
Requiem
SHOGO
Sin
Turok 2
Wheel of Time

### FIRST-PERSON SHOOTER (MULTI-PLAYER)

**Nominees:**
Aliens vs Predator
Half-Life
Kingpin
Quake III: Arena
Requiem
SHOGO
Sin
Unreal Tournament

### TURN-BASED STRATEGY

**Nominees:**
101st Airborne in Normandy
Alpha Centauri
Battle of Britain
Braveheart
Civilization: Call to Power
Civilization: Test of Time
Disciples
Eastern Front II
Heroes of Might & Magic III
Imperialism 2
MAX 2
North vs South
Ruthless.com
Starfleet Command
Star Trek: Birth of the Federation
Worms Armageddon

### ONLINE ONLY

**Nominees:**
Cyberstrike 2
Everquest
Starsiege Tribes
Team Fortress
Ultima Online: The Second Age
Warbirds 2

### REAL-TIME STRATEGY

**Nominees:**
Abomination
Age of Empires II
Army Men 2
Caesar III
Close Combat 3
C&C: Tiberian Sun
Constructor: Street Wars
Creatures 2
Cutthroats
Dominion: Storm Over Rift 3
Dungeon Keeper 2
Echelon
Enemy Infestation
Fighting Steel
Fleet Command
Force 21
Gangsters
Homeworld
Knights & Merchants
Machines
Man of War II
Myth 2
Pharoah
Populous: The Beginning
Railroad Tycoon 2
Riverworld
Rollercoaster Tycoon
Saga: Rage of the Vikings
Settlers 3
Seven Kingdoms II
Shadow Company
Simcity 3000
Theme Park World
Total Annihilation: Kingdoms
Wargasm
War of the Worlds
Warzone 2100

### DRIVING/RACING

**Nominees:**
Boss Rally
Breakneck
Buggy
Burnout Drag Racing
Carmageddon 2
Colin McRae Rally
DeathKarz
Driver
Eidos Official F1
GP 500
Grand Prix Legends
Grand Theft Auto 2
Grand Touring
Johnny Herbert's Grand Prix
M25 Racer
Midtown Madness
Monaco Grand Prix
Motocross Madness
Moto Racer 2
NASCAR 3
NASCAR Road Racing
NASCAR Truck Racing
Need For Speed: High Stakes
Newman Haas Racing
NHRA Drag Racing
Powerslide
Rally Championship 2000
Re-Volt
Rollcage
SCARS

*please tear along the dotted line*

# GAME • of the • YEAR

## VOTING FORM LIFTOUT

Sega Rally 2
Speedbusters
Sports Car GT
Star Wars Episode One Racer
Superbike World Champ
Thrust, Twist & Turn
TOCA Touring Cars 2
Viper Racing

### ROLE-PLAYING

**Nominees:**
Baldur's Gate
Battlespire
Fallout 2
Jagged Alliance 2
Might & Magic VII
Return to Krondor
Revenant
System Shock 2
Ultima IX: Ascension

### FLIGHT SIM

**Nominees:**
Apache Havoc
Dawn of Aces
European Air War
F16 Aggressor
F22 Lightning 3
FA18 Carrier Strike Fighter
Falcon 4
Fighter Pilot
Flight Simulator 2000
Flight Unlimited III
Israeli Air Force
Jetfighter: Full Burn
Luftwaffe Command
Microsoft Combat Flight Sim
MIG Alley
Nations
Novalogic F16 + MIG 29
Red Baron 3D
Thunder Brigade
Top Gun: Hornet's Nest
Total Air War
USAF
WWII Fighters

### MISSION PACK

**Nominees:**
Age of Empires: The Rise of Rome
Alpha Centauri: Alien Crossfire
Baldur's Gate: Tales of the Sword Coast
Commandos: Beyond the Call of Duty
Die by the Sword: Limb from Limb
Freespace: Silent Threat
Grand Theft Auto: London 69
Half-Life Opposing Force
Quake 2: Ground Zero
Rainbow Six: Eagle Watch
Rollercoaster Tycoon: Added Attractions
Sin: Wages of Sin
Starcraft: Brood Wars
Total Annihilation: Commander
Unreal: Return to Na Pali

### FANTASY SIM

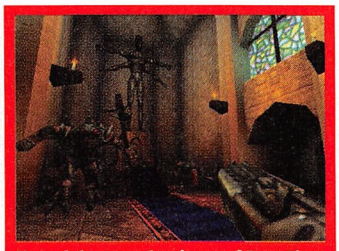
**Nominees:**
Descent 3
Fatal Abyss
Freespace 2
Heavy Gear 2
I-War Defiance
Lander
Mechwarrior 3
Rogue Squadron
Starsiege
V2000
X-Wing Alliance

### ACTION/ ADVENTURE

**Nominees:**
Abe's Exoddus
Asghan
Dark Vengeance
Drakan
Heretic II
Indiana Jones: Infernal Machine
King's Quest: Mask of Eternity
Lands of Lore 3
Montezuma's Return
Outcast
Prince of Persia 3D
Rayman 2
Redguard
Resident Evil 2
Shadow Man
Silver
Soul Reaver: Legacy of Kain
Space Bunnies Must Die
The Fifth Element
The Nomad Soul
The Phantom Menace
Tomb Raider III



**Curse of Monkey Island: Last year's winner of Best Adventure**



**Unreal: last year's winner of Best First Person Shooter and Best Graphics**

Tomb Raider: The Last Revelation
Trespasser

### STRATEGIC ACTION

**Nominees:**
Delta Force
Gulf War
Hidden & Dangerous
Missing in Action
Rainbow Six
Return Fire 2
Rogue Spear
Spearhead
Thief: The Dark Project
Uprising 2

### ADVENTURE

**Nominees:**
Beavis & Butthead
Beyond Time
Blackstone Chronicles
Dark Side of the Moon
Discworld Noir
Forbidden City
Gabriel Knight: Blood of the Sacred, Blood of the Damned
Grim Fandango
Nightlong: Union City Conspiracy
Quest for Glory V: Dragon Fire
Reah
Redjack
The Ring

### PINBALL

**Nominees:**
Big Race USA Pro Pinball
Judge Dredd Pinball
Microsoft Pinball Arcade
Pinball Soccer 98

### ARCADE

**Nominees:**
Asteroids
Cluedo
Get Medieval
Global Domination
Hedz
Mortal Kombat 4
Pandemonium 2
Wetrix

### SPORTS

**Nominees:**
Actua Tennis
AFL 99
Australian Cricket Captain
Championship Manager 3
Cricket World Cup 99
FIFA 99
FIFA 2000
Jimmy White's Cueball 2
Links 99
Links 2000
Madden 99
Madden 2000
Microsoft Golf 99
Microsoft International Soccer
Mike Stewart's Bodyboarding
NBA Live 99
NBA Live 2000
Fox Sports NBA 2000
NHL 99
Pro 18 World Tour Golf
Roland Garros Tennis
Shane Warne Cricket 99
Snow Wave Avalanche
Tiger Woods 99
UEFA Champions League 98/99
Virtual Deep Sea Fishing
WCW Nitro

# Try diplomacy first.

AVALON HILL'S

# Diplomacy

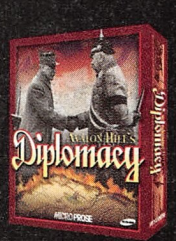
## You can always invade them later.

Based on "the greatest board game invented this century" (Games Magazine), Diplomacy is a strategy game of skill and cunning negotiation set amongst the powers at the turn of the 20th century. You exist in a precarious balance of power on the verge of one of the most influential times in modern history - a time where deviousness pays. No one can get ahead alone: You need your allies but can you trust them? Trust, betrayal, faith and treachery are prime ingredients in victory.










G

CD-ROM

MICROPROSE

HASBRO Interactive

# DIRECT GAMING

## WHAT DIRECTX 7.0 REALLY MEANS A TALE OF TWO PERSPECTIVES

Late last year Microsoft released their latest version of DirectX for all us keen gamers and game developers to start using. But what does it actually do? James McCutcheon and Daniel Rutter examine the impact DirectX 7.0 will have on the games we play, from the differing perspectives of a game developer and a game player.

## THE DEVELOPER

Until version 7.0 DirectX was really the sole domain of C++ coders; though it was possible to link DirectX calls from Visual Basic, it was never documented or supported by Microsoft. The good news is that all VB coders can now use DX to their heart's content. Since VB is also easier to use than C++ this will open the door to more coders. But before you get too excited not all the DX functions will be accessible.

### DIRECT3D

With all the changes in the 3D gaming world it was not a surprise to see Microsoft lift the hood on the 3D engine and do a few more tweaks. The calculation of transformation and lighting effects used to be done by the main CPU under DX6. This has now been handed to our trusty 3D cards to do the work under version DX7. Of course, you'll still need a 3D card capable of hardware T&L.

Direct3D and DirectDraw now support a special type of texture map used in environment mapping, called a cubic environment map. Cubic environment mapping involves the use of a six-sided texture that can contain images to be applied to objects in a scene.

Direct3D for DirectX 7.0 moves lighting, material, and viewport parameters into the device interface. Therefore, separate objects to handle these parameters are no longer needed, nor are their interfaces.

Applications that use the Direct3D geometry pipeline can take advantage of new support for geometry blending. Geometry blending can be used to perform "skinning" effects to increase the realism of segmented objects in a scene, especially characters.

DX7 has also implemented "device-state blocks" which make it possible for a Direct3D application to record common sequences of device state changes into a construct that has a unique identifier, or block handle. Applications can use the block handle to execute previously recorded state blocks in a single method call. Besides minimising the calls required to change device states, state blocks enable devices to cache precompiled sets of state changes for optimal execution, often

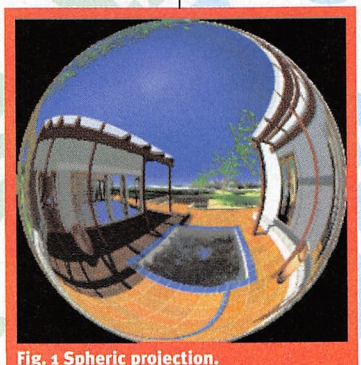


Fig. 1 Spheric projection.

## THE GAMER

What's in DX7 to interest game players, as opposed to game developers? Quite a bit, actually. DirectX 7 is not a big deal for people running most current hardware. Its main focus is better support for cutting-edge gear. If you're running hardware whose every function is already supported by DirectX 6, you'll notice no change with the new version. But the new stuff is interesting, nonetheless.

### DIRECT3D

Direct3D now supports hardware transform and lighting (T&L) engines. At the time of writing, the only PC video chipset with such a feature is nVIDIA's GeForce 256, but we'll be seeing it in chipsets from other manufacturers soon enough. Hardware T&L can take a huge load off the CPU, but only if a game would otherwise put a huge load ON the CPU with zillions of polygons and lots of dynamic lighting.

Again, at the time of writing there's no game software that gets anything like the full benefit from hardware T&L, because putting 3D graphics that detailed into a game would make it hopelessly unplayable on any machine lacking the cutting edge hardware to handle it. Game makers could make super-polygons a top-detail-setting option, but they'd have to create much more detailed models and levels that would only be seen by a tiny fraction of the market. This will change, of course, but hardware T&L is nonetheless not very exciting yet.

Hardware T&L is also not "a DirectX thing"; OpenGL games can benefit just as much from it, provided the video card drivers implement it. The GeForce drivers certainly do.

Direct3D 7 also includes cube environment mapping, which is a way of putting more realistic reflections on objects. The quick and cheap way to make an object reflect its environment is to map a spheric projection of that environment onto the object. A spheric projection is a circular image (see Fig.1) that wraps around the object doing the reflecting so that the circle's edge joins at a point (imagine the circle made of rubber, and you'll get the idea). It looks fine everywhere




## THE DEVELOPER

resulting in improved performance.

The Direct3D texture manager has been expanded to allow applications to prioritise managed textures. Direct3D uses texture priorities to determine which textures to keep in memory, and which to remove.

Direct3D has been optimized to use any special instructions supported by the CPU. Supported instruction sets include the AMD 3D-Now! instruction set on some AMD processors and the MMX instruction set supported by many Intel processors.

In summary, Direct3D has gone through a lot of speed enhancements and it will be interesting to see some benchmarks done at a latter date to see these improvements.

A new 3D utility library has been added similar to the existing DirectDraw DDUtil. This will help new comers to DirectX perform the common functions much easier.

# DIRECTMUSIC

In DX7, DirectMusic now supports the DLS2 (Downloadable Sounds Level 2) standard. The DLS standard has been published by the MIDI Manufacturers Association. DLS is a way of allowing wave-table synthesis to be based on samples provided at run time, rather than hard-wired into the system. The data describing an instrument is downloaded to the synthesizer, and then the instrument can be played like any other MIDI instrument. Because DLS data can be distributed as part of an application, developers can be sure that their soundtracks are delivered uniformly on all systems. Moreover, they are not limited in their choice of instruments.

# DIRECTSOUND

DirectSound has also been into the tune up shop with an improved hardware voice management and also some new processing algorithms to attempt to fix the speed issues with 3D audio.

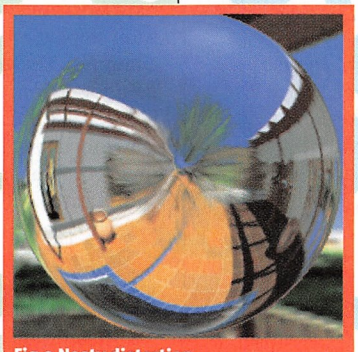


Fig.2 Nasty distortion.

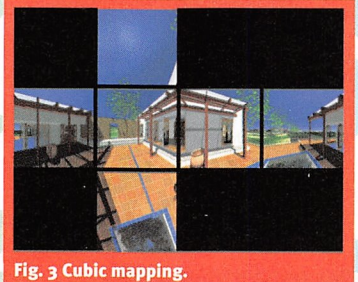


Fig. 3 Cubic mapping.

## THE GAMER

except at that joining point, where the inescapable distortion caused by the projection method creates, well, a bit of an anus, really (see Fig.2).

It's impossible to get rid of this nasty effect unless the texture is rendered to an outrageously high resolution. You can get away with spheric mapping on objects which can't be viewed from all directions; if the anus is hidden by the pillar that holds up the crystal ball, for instance, or is underneath the shiny sports car, then you're fine.

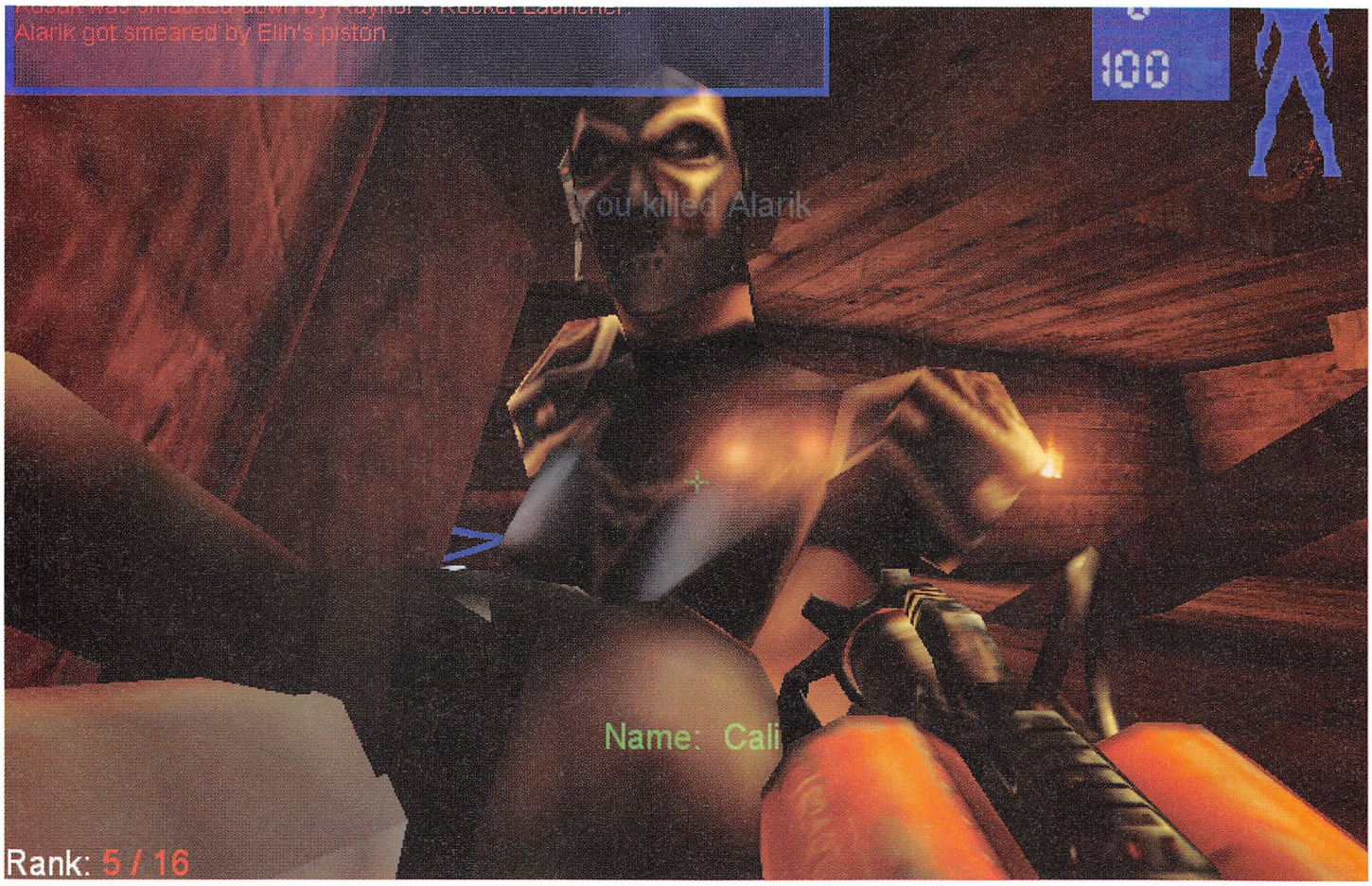
Cubic mapping uses six separate textures (see Fig.3) which are squished onto the reflective object as if they'd been folded into a cube and then shrunk onto its surface. There can still be a little distortion in cubic mapping if the textures aren't rendered at a high enough resolution, but if they're rendered to the SAME resolution, each, as the circular alternative (and thus, of course, take up six times the space), then they'll look great.

In the example shown here (see Fig. 4), nVIDIA's Bubble demo for the GeForce, the spheric texture has about half as many pixels as the cubic version. The spheric version thus looks a little worse even away from the anus, because of its lower resolution; the low spheric texture resolution might perhaps have been picked by NVIDIA to make cubic look even cooler. If the spheric texture uses as much memory as the cubic one, it will look almost as good over most of its area.

If the environment is static, as with this demo, cubic mapping works very well indeed. If the environment is dynamic - if moving things have to be reflected - then the textures have to be rendered on the fly, and performance suffers severely. nVIDIA's "Guts" demo, which flies the bubble past intestine-y things, has a much lower frame rate than the plain Bubble. No current processor has the power needed to do cubic mapping as other than an occasional novelty, so it's not the selling point it might seem to be.

# DIRECTSOUND

In the audio department, DirectSound and DirectSound 3D now support sound cards with




## THE DEVELOPER

### DIRECTINPUT

Under DX7, DirectInput will now support up to eight mouse buttons. Great - I have had enough trouble with just two. It will also allow applications to now have exclusive access to the keyboard. Those lucky enough to have a force feedback joystick will be pleased to hear that new methods for reading and writing of force-feedback effect files are available, and a Force Editor application is provided for creating effects.

Microsoft DirectDraw stereo support has been added for active devices.

### DIRECTPLAY

Multiplayer fans will be glad to know that ripple launching has been added for DirectPlay lobbied applications. A ripple launch is where one application is required to launch another application. This will help make online game play easier and more reliable to implement, though unfortunately not faster.

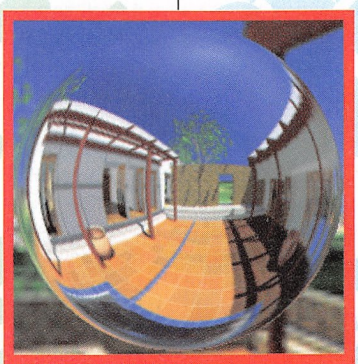


Fig. 4 The Bubble Demo

### OTHER FEATURES

Microsoft has also improved documentation to include dynamic filtering for language-specific information and even more sample applications have been included in the SDK. The end result is that under DX7 the main winner is 3D graphics with an expected boost of about 20%. Considering this is the main thrust of the developer market at this point of time, it's not a bad thing at all. The VB accessibility is also a good thing for the younger developers.

*James McCutcheon*

## THE GAMER

hardware voice management, which should speed up games that want to play more effects at once than the sound card has output channels. There's also more efficient 3D audio processing - although using positional audio when your sound card doesn't support it in hardware still causes a big performance hit. Support for Downloadable Sounds Level 2 (DLS-2) means games can easily set up their own custom collection of MIDI instruments on wavetable sound cards. This may create a resurgence of popularity for MIDI music in games. Or it may not.

### DIRECTINPUT

DirectInput 7 adds support for up to eight mouse buttons; how anyone's going to fit that many buttons onto a useable mouse is another question. More handily, there's a better control panel for advanced game controllers, including force-feedback devices.

### DIRECTPLAY

DirectPlay, the networked multiplayer game connection component of DirectX, is little changed from v6.1a. If you're upgrading from v6.0, though, this is your chance to get considerably better stability. DirectPlay is also a bit faster now.

### OTHER FEATURES

Minor features include support for stereoscopic displays, which should help iron out the current mish-mash of different ways to implement LCD shutter-glasses 3D systems, many of which presently display quirky behaviour with various games. You'll probably still get a headache, but at least it'll be from the 3D graphics, not from trying to make the glasses work. There's also vertex blending, which makes 3D objects look more realistic by smoothing over the joins between different shapes.

*Daniel Rutter*

**PLUS:** SDK Downloadable from *http://www.microsoft.com/directx/developer/downloads/default.asp*

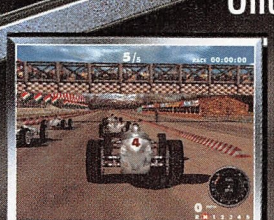
# Capture the Spirit of Speed 1937...

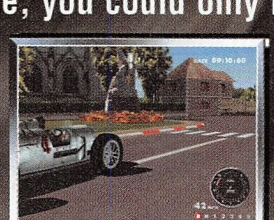
This is a racing simulation like no other, recreating the classic years of legendary racers such as Mercedes, Bugatti, Alfa Romeo and Auto Union...

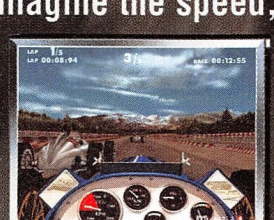
# SPIRIT of SPEED 1937

Drive a choice of 15 real 1930's Grand Prix cars on famous high banked circuits like Brooklands and Monza. Take up the challenge in Single Race, Scenario or Complete Championship Season.

**Once, you could only imagine the speed, danger and thrill... now you can live it!**







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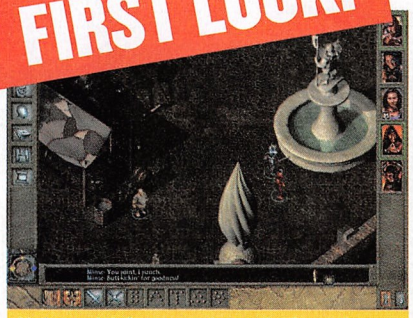
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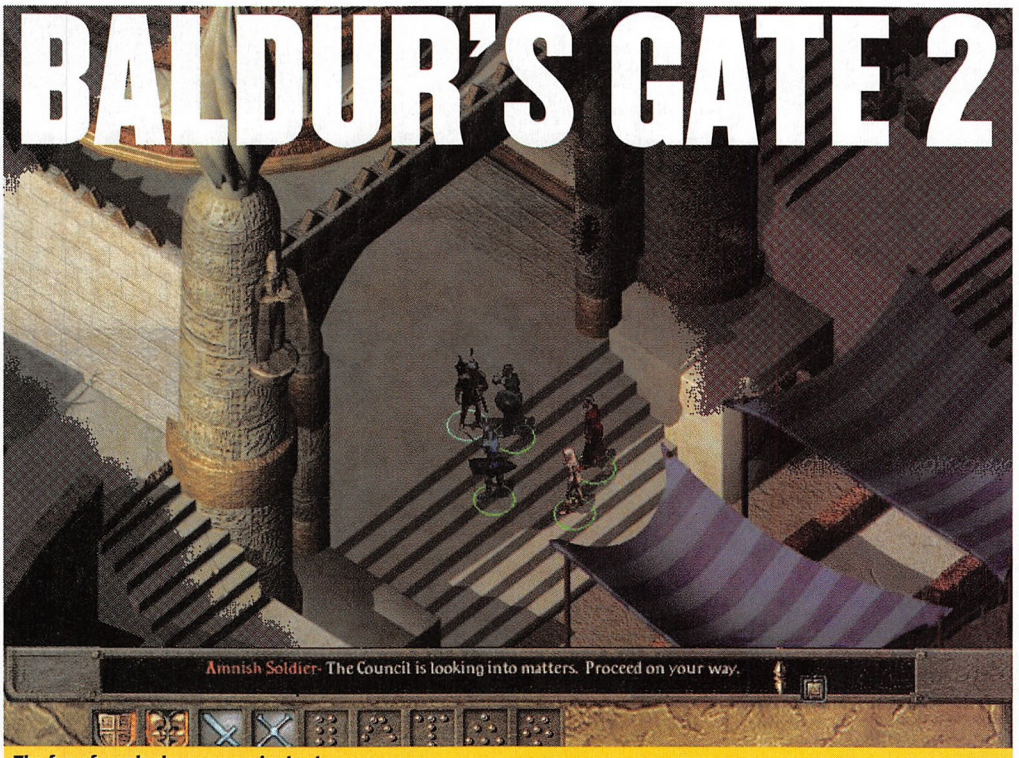
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FIRST LOOK!



Make a wish for more plot at the fountain.

# BALDUR'S GATE 2




The fog of war looks as annoyingly close as ever.

● Genre: **RPG** ● Developer: **Bioware** ● Due: **3rd Qtr 2000**

Interplay recently announced that Black Isle Studios, its role-playing division, has begun work on the sequel to Baldur's Gate. Developer Bioware has decided to reuse the Infinity engine designed for the original game, albeit with several significant enhancements. In addition to better pathfinding and larger characters, attention has been paid to the multiplayer options and code to ensure a more enjoyable co-op experience. The interface has been reworked to allow for a full screen display, while a graphic resolution of 800x600 and 3D acceleration (through OpenGL) will both be supported. It must be said, though, that the untrained eye would find it difficult to spot the difference between images of the first iteration and these of its sequel, Shadows of Amn.

Elsewhere, it's the game's other new gameplay features that really impress. Responding to criticisms that BG was somewhat lacking in character development, party members will now gain their own strongholds after attaining a certain level. Like the castle in Might & Magic VII, strongholds reflect the character's fame in the land and will draw him (or her) into the politics of the realm. Also, Bioware are promising a remarkable amount of dialogue, with just one character having as much as the entire population in Baldur's Gate.



Quick, everyone grab a bucket of water!



The adorable Imoen makes a return appearance.

spotlight

## AUSTRALIA'S MOST WANTED

The unstoppable Team Fortress 2 has tightened his grip at the top this month with an awesome showing. Warcraft 3 creeps up a few places, as Diablo 2 takes a tumble and Deus Ex remains steady. Opposing Force is the real surprise packet, though - see the review on p66.
Send your Top Five Most Wanted Games to **wanted@pcpowerplay.next.com.au**
**Greg Johnson from Sherwood, QLD,** voted for Commandos 2 and will be receiving a copy of said game when it's released later this year.

| | |
|---|---|
| 1 | TEAM FORTRESS 2 |
| 2 | Warcraft 3 |
| 3 | Deus Ex |
| 4 | Diablo 2 |
| 5 | Quake III: Arena |
| 6 | Duke Nukem Forever |
| 7 | Halo |
| 8 | Half-Life: Opposing Force |
| 9 | Freelancer |
| 10 | Unreal Tournament |

FIRST LOOK!

# SWAT 3

● Genre: **Squad Shooter** ● Developer: **Sierra** ● Due: **Imminently**

Sierra's take on the burgeoning tactical shooter genre arrived just too late for review this month, but we thought we'd give you a little taste of this impressive looking game here. Unlike Rogue Spear and Hidden & Dangerous, SWAT 3 places less emphasis upon mission planning. Without detailed maps and plans, it's up to the player to react on-the-fly to determine the best route. The developers argue this won't detract from the tactics, but rather integrate them deeper into the gameplay. Such an approach could ensure a greater degree of immersion. We'll see how it fares next issue.

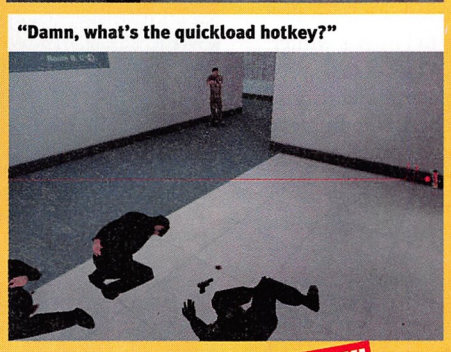
"Yeah, mate, keep going. We're right behind you..."

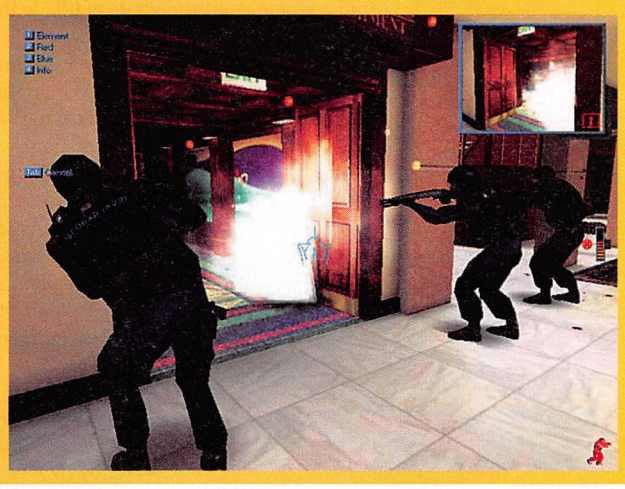






"Damn, what's the quickload hotkey?"



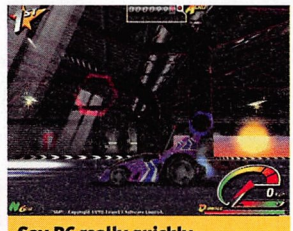


FIRST LOOK!

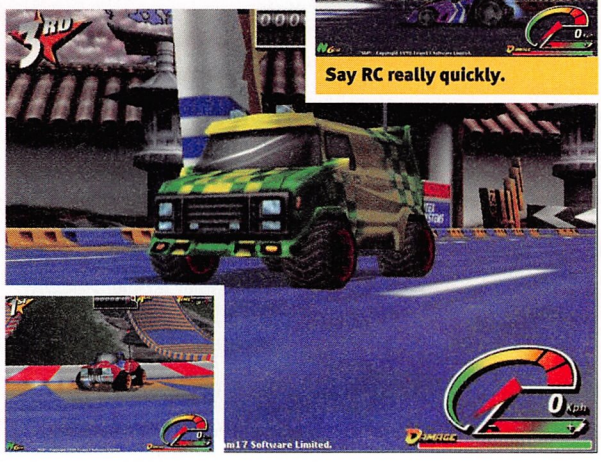
# STUNT GP

● Genre: **Arcade Racing** ● Developer: **Team 17** ● Due: **1st Qtr 2000**

Trying to best Re-Volt in the radio-controlled car racing stakes is certainly a steep challenge for any developer, but Team 17 seem confident that Stunt GP will be good enough to not disgrace itself. For one, they've opted for a somewhat different racing environment. Away from Re-Volt's amusing everyday settings, the track selection in Stunt GP skims a heady mixture of loop-the-loops, wild jumps, corkscrews and other physical improbabilities. While powerups make a predictable appearance, it's in the performance of various stunts to collect cash rewards that the real interest in Stunt GP resides.



Say RC really quickly.



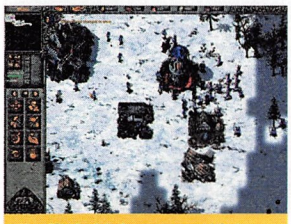


# TZAR

● Genre: **RTS** ● Developer: **Haemimont** ● Due: **2nd Qtr 2000**

It seems each new real-time strategy game these days boasts of how it offers several diverse paths to victory, as opposed to simply amassing military might. Yet most of them fail to deliver on such promises. Bulgarian development team Haemimont are the latest to give it a shot. Playing as one of three genuinely distinct races (Arabian, Asian or Eurpoean), you can elect to specialise the growth of your kingdom in one of four ways. Whether an empire becomes powerful through magic, trade, the military or, curiously, religion, each arena confers distinct advantages to exploit en route to conquering your enemies. Hopefully Tzar will be the first to do this properly.





The little blokes are so big!

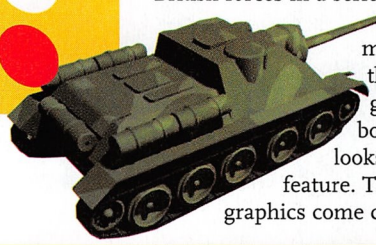
spotlight

# SUDDEN STRIKE

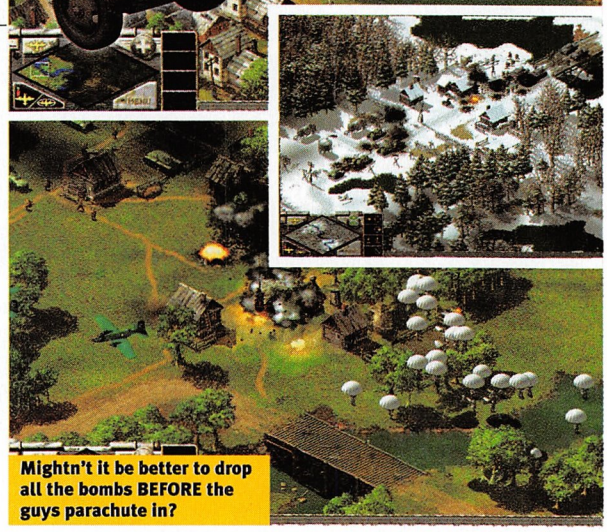
• Genre: **Strategy** • Developer: **A mystery** • Due: **2nd Qtr 2000**

The Second World War has supplied us with surprisingly few games outside of hardcore military simulations. Aside from the Close Combat series, we can't recall a single real-time strategy title with a WWII theme. Oh, look, here's another one now.

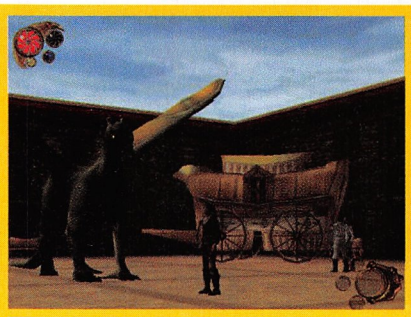
Sudden Strike (developed by a German-based outfit who rather strangely have declined to be named) tasks the player with leading either Russian, German, French, American or British forces in a series of campaigns stretching from the D-day landings to Hitler's winter march to Moscow. With up to a thousands units to command (from gunners and parachutists to fighter bombers), realism and complexity looks to be Sudden Strike's strongest feature. Though the gorgeous isometric graphics come close.





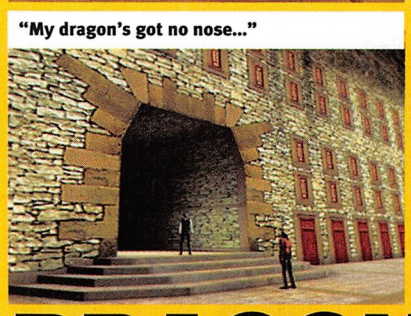


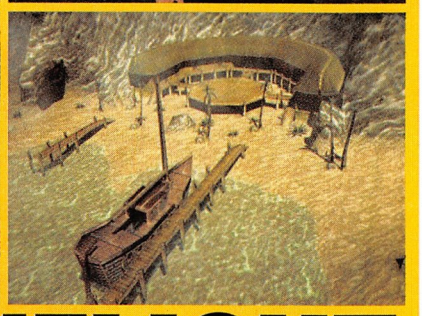
**Mightn't it be better to drop all the bombs BEFORE the guys parachute in?**





**"My dragon's got no nose..."**



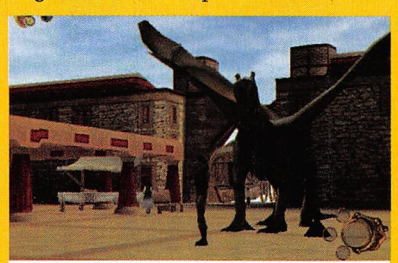


# DRAGONFLIGHT

• Genre: **Adventure** • Developer: **Grolier** • Due: **Mid 2000**

Anne McCaffrey is one of the more interesting fantasy writers around, her work straddling the at times vague divide between science fiction and high fantasy. Anticipating the gaming potential in this, Grolier has wisely snapped up the rights to her Pern series and Dragonflight is the result.

The gameplay will be mainly puzzle-based and with some 200 characters to converse with, Dragonflight is an adventure game at heart. However, as the player character possesses a set of skills to upgrade by completing various quests and subquests, there is also a definite nod toward traditional role-playing. The 3D engine looks rather proficient as well.



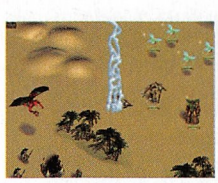
**"Tell that joke and you're toast, human!"**

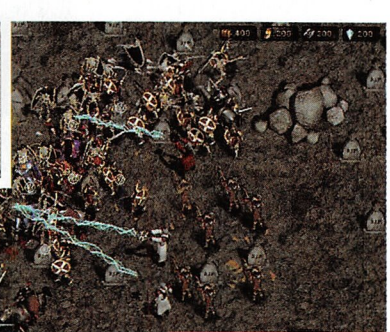
# WARLORDS: BATTLECRY

• Genre: **Strategy** • Developer: **Red Orb** • Due: **2nd Qtr 2000**

Mindscape have sensibly chosen not to suffix the latest Warlords title with IV, since it marks a significant departure from the three earlier games in the series. Unlike those turn-based titles, Warlords: Battlecry journeys into the territory of real-time strategy. The real Warlords IV will be a strictly turn-based affair, however.

Providing further evidence against Blizzard's claim that Warcraft III is the first role-playing strategy game, success in Battlecry leans heavily upon nurturing a group of heroes throughout each campaign. Experience gained by hero leaders in one mission carries onto the next, while an unlimited supply of cannon fodder units constitute the rest of your army. Each hero also has a tally of D&D-style stats and a host of traits dependent upon their race and character class.





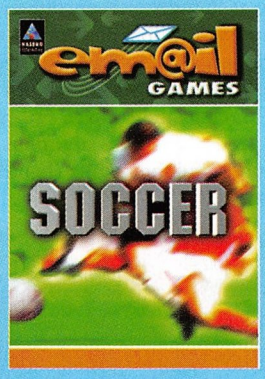


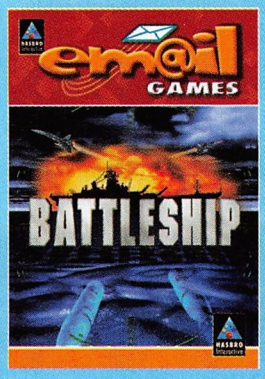


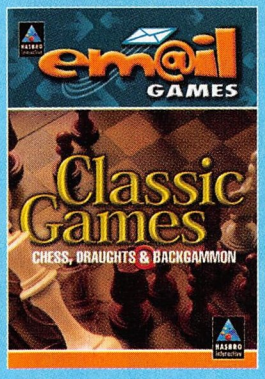
**"GGGRRRRRAAAAAAAAAAAWWRRGHH!"**

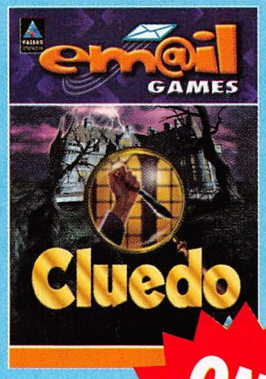
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HASBRO Interactive

spotlight

# SUBMARINE TITANS

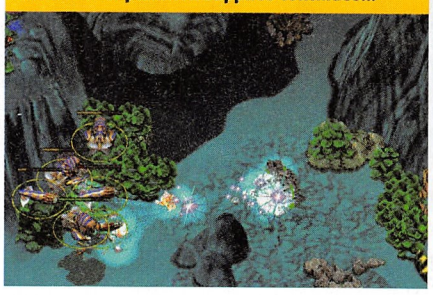
● Genre: **Aquatic RTS** ● Developer: **Ellipse** ● Due: **1st Qtr 2000**

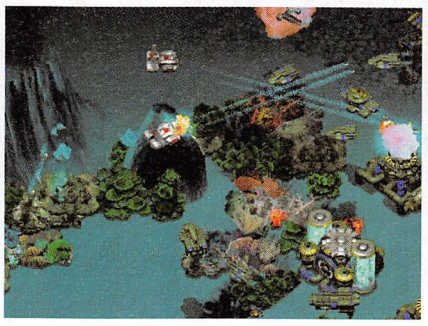
After numerous delays, local developers Ellipse Studios are getting close to completing their marine-themed real-time strategy title. Many things have changed since we last previewed Submarine Titans back in PCPP#30, though the visual look remains fairly similar. We had previously reported there would be no resource management or base building, but now there is - and plenty of it as well. With five different resources to secure and a pleasingly lengthy construction list, Submarine Titans appears to have a strategic complexity that exceeds the likes of Starcraft and Age of Empires 2. Also, a third race - the Silicons - has been added to challenge the White Sharks and Black Octopi.

**Submarine Titans has shed its 'Starcraft under water' tag.**



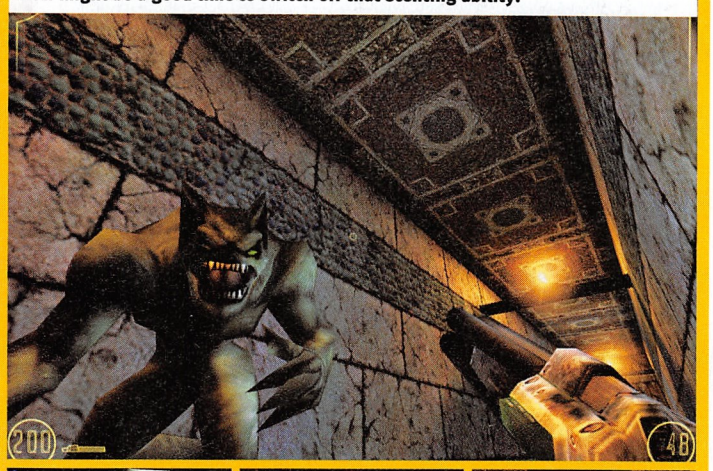
**The war over plankton supplies continues...**







**Now might be a good time to switch off that scenting ability.**





NEW SHOTS

# WEREWOLF

● Genre: **Action/RPG** ● Developer: **Dreamforge** ● Due: **2nd Qtr 2000**

Along with Vampire, Dreamforge's Werewolf is the other White Wolf pen and paper RPG currently making the transition to the PC. Powered by the Unreal engine, this RPG also bears quite a significant action leaning - though these two facts aren't necessarily related, of course. In what must almost certainly be a first for computer gaming, smell will play a large and unusual role in Werewolf's gameplay. Your character's lycanthropic nature allows the ability to track enemies via their scent, with light indicators on screen showing the direction from which the scent is emanating. Perhaps some enterprising company will soon bring out a smell feedback peripheral?

NEW SHOTS

# VAMPIRE

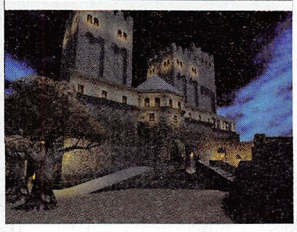
● Genre: **RPG** ● Developer: **Nihilistic** ● Due: **2nd Qtr 2000**

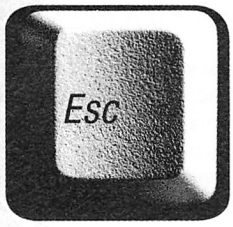
These tasty looking new screenshots offer another glimpse of the undoubted promise behind Nihilistic's cold-blooded role-playing epic - the interface appears clean and the moodily modelled characters and environments possess the required grim, gloomy edge. However, much of our attention has been diverted toward the multiplayer aspects of the game as more concrete information has been revealed. While co-operative play is available, the twist is that one player can also become the "game master" and thus orchestrate everything from the overall story to each individual encounter. Essentially, this player runs the game's server, which enables them to make changes - small or radical - to the game world in real-time. It sounds incredibly ambitious, but if successful the results should be worth it.

**"Was it this big?" "No, I'm telling you, it was THIS big!"**










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Pure Creative/TMW229/NG/RAT

spotlight

# SHADOWATCH

● Genre: **Tactical Combat** ● Developer: **Red Storm** ● Due: **Mid 2000**

"Brave" is how we would best describe the next game from Red Storm. For Shadowatch marks a radical departure in presentation, if not theme, for the makers of Rainbow Six and Rogue Spear. Ostensibly still a variation on the tried-and-tested squad-based tactical shooter, Shadowatch swaps the first-person action for a more leisurely isometric pace. In other words, out goes real-time and in comes taking turns. More obviously, the entire visual aesthetic has had a complete overhaul. Realistically textured 3D locations are notable in their absence, replaced by a stylised anime look that lends the atmosphere an intriguing comic flavour.




**Initially disconcerting, the anime style is starting to grow on us.**

**From the creator of Alone in the Dark, this should offer plenty of suspense.**



FIRST LOOK!

# THE DEVIL INSIDE

● Genre: **Action/Adventure** ● Developer: **Game Squad** ● Due: **2nd Qtr 2000**

Here's a fascinating idea. It all starts with your character having to clear a haunted building of its nightmarish occupants (we're talking minions of Hell here). But this being Hollywood and all, your employers are not going to have you ask them politely to leave. No, instead they've armed you with a whole array of nasty weaponry, and of all things, a television crew. Called "Devil Inside", this TV show steeped in the paranormal is driven by ratings and, of course, the almighty sponsorship dollar. As well as blasting away the living dead at every opportunity, you've been given the brief to produce a scintillating television show, or face getting the axe.

Exactly how Devil Inside will reward or penalise the player for the actions in the Resident Evil-esque adventure title is yet to be revealed, though the developers (headed by Hubert Chardot, author of the Alone in the Dark series) have stressed that researching your enemy's (there are forty different types in the game) strengths and weaknesses will provide a distinct advantage. Most intriguing, though, is the notion that players will be under constant pressure to keep some pace in their exploration of the house - which is a cunning contrast to the cautious gameplay that games like this normally encourage.

FIRST LOOK!

# OFFROAD

● Genre: **Off-Road Racing** ● Developer: **Rage** ● Due: **2nd Qtr 2000**

Ahh... the joy of speeding around a tarmac track (or a dirt one, as the case may be) basking in the satisfaction that it doesn't get much better than this. To be true, the last 18 months has seen the release of many a quality driving sim - each with fantastic visuals and impressively accurate physics models.

And equally, the joy of tearing up a delicate system in a vehicle designed specifically to take a bit of a battering. Offroad gives gamers the opportunity to take all manner of buggies (surprisingly) off-road using a painstakingly developed - and purportedly accurate - physics model. A lot like Powerslide really, but with a more contemporary flavour.




**That bodywork doesn't seem to provide much protection.**

# OFFSHORE SURFING

FIRST LOOK!

- Genre: **Surfing** - Developer: **Geosync**
- Due: **Soon**







**Surfer dude glances in horror at the foam to his right.**

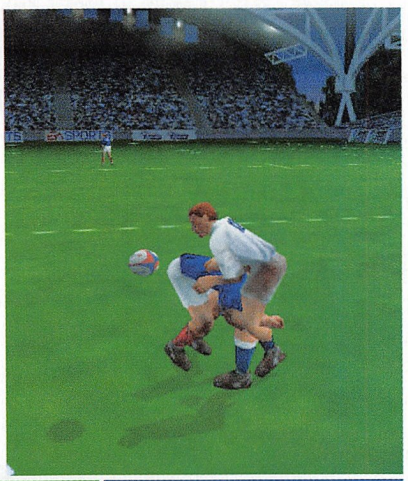
Aside from the great Wave Race on the Nintendo 64, it's hard to recall a single aquatic sports title worthy of title on any system. On the PC things look awfully bare when it comes to simulating the myriad pleasures of the sand and surf. Mike Stewart's Pro Bodyboarding, anyone? Thought not.

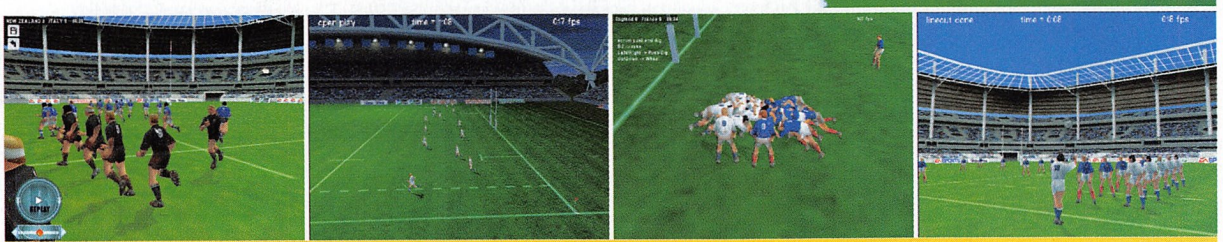
Local lads Geosync are hoping to rectify this situation with their debut game, Offshore Surfing. Promised features include eight real world surfing locations (several of which some of you should be intimately familiar with - Margaret River, Bells Beach), four distinct surfer models and an option for multiplayer. Recent progress on the graphics engine has seen the addition of translucent water effects, though it must be said that the foam needs some more work.

# RUGBY 2000

- Genre: **Blokes & Pigskin** - Developer: **Creative Assembly** - Due: **March 2000**

Sports fans bemoaning the lack of rugby (be it league or union) games of late now have cause for rejoicing. EA Sports are readying Rugby 2000 for release in the next few months - just in time for the new season. Coded in the UK by veteran developers Creative Assembly, the game has licensed last year's World Cup tournament and includes teams and players from each rugby-playing region of the world. EA are understandably thrilled by the involvement of England coach Clive Woodward, but we must admit to experiencing some difficulty in getting our heads around such promised features as "Extended true-spin physics" and "Hyper realistic replay".





**Sadly, Rugby 2000 isn't the first fruit of EA Studio OZ - but the Wallabies will still be the best team in the game. Natch.**

spotlight


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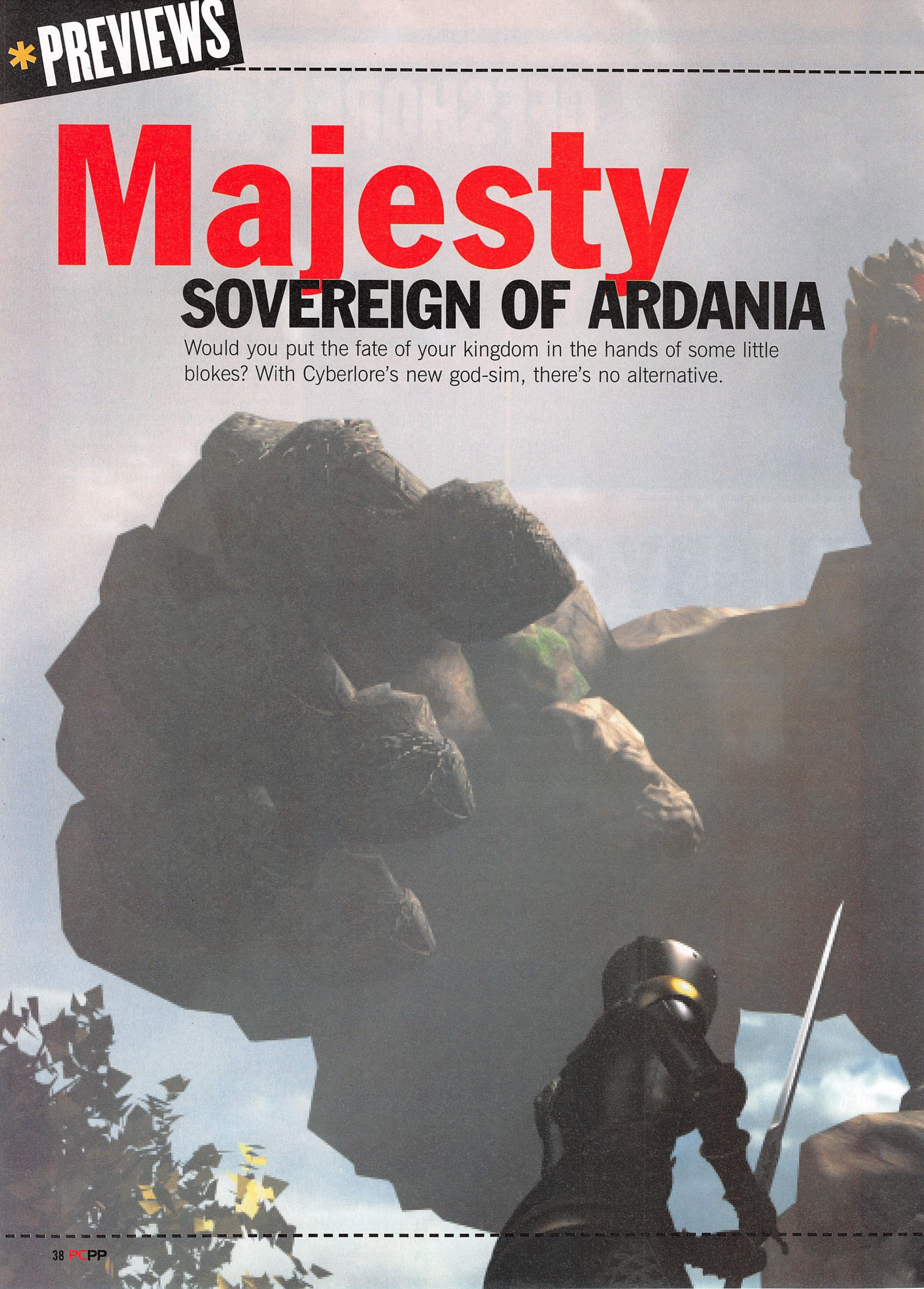
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# Majesty

## SOVEREIGN OF ARDANIA

Would you put the fate of your kingdom in the hands of some little blokes? With Cyberlore's new god-sim, there's no alternative.



## DETAILS

- **Genre:** God-Sim/Strategy
- **Players:** 1-Multi
- **Developer:** Cyberlore
- **Publisher:** Hasbro
- **Due:** 1st Qtr 2000

It's the curse of every real-time strategy game: those pesky little blokes never do exactly what you tell them to. When marshalling a bunch of eager recruits for a surprise attack on an enemy village, it's almost guaranteed that one of the dimwitted blighters will get stuck behind a tree or take the long way round probably via a heavily fortified enemy encampment. The idiot.

Perhaps the trouble with real-time strategy games is that they allow the player too much control, they give you too many responsibilities. The end result is inevitably frustration when your painstakingly devised strategy degenerates into a frantic clickfest because the AI refuses to take the initiative. With Majesty, Cyberlore is attempting to alleviate such frustration by removing direct unit control from the hands of the player.

In your role as sovereign of the realm, influence is the primary method by which you wield power; make the accomplishment of certain goals or quests enticing enough and they'll be carried out by your (hopefully) loyal band of heroes. As with any innovative design, Cyberlore has encountered a few obstacles during development. "It took a while for us to place Majesty with a publisher, in part because the concept was so unique," recalls Jay Adan, Marketing Director at Cyberlore. "But once the publishers started to get it, the light bulb came on big and bright over their heads."

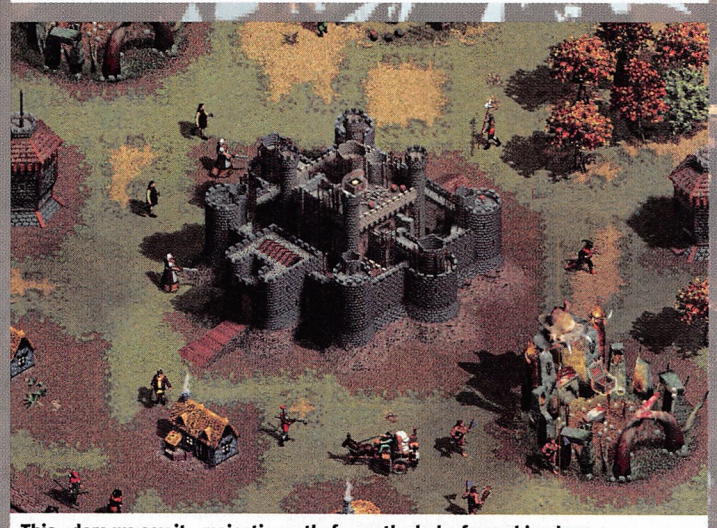
### City building

However, the early stages of the game aren't too full of surprises. The construction and subsequent expansion of your kingdom is the foundation of the gameplay. It must be stressed that this is one aspect where the player does have complete control. Castles are built to provide a base of operations, while other structures such as temples, smithys, guilds, inns and marketplaces are available to accommodate the needs of your population.

Majesty may begin in familiar territory, but it's not long before its more radical ideas become apparent. The construction of a Rangers' Guild, for instance, will allow the recruitment of rangers. No, really. Since all rangers have an unbridled love of the wilderness, they'll soon start exploring the uncharted areas



**Our foolhardy hero tries to tackle a stone golem singlehandedly.**



**This - dare we say it - majestic castle forms the hub of your kingdom.**










**An undead raid on the city outskirts is repelled by magic.**

surrounding your castle. To encourage them to venture in a specific direction, you can place rewards on the map. The first ranger to reach the reward will pocket the loot.

According to Jay, it's here that we find the crucial difference between Majesty and most other strategy games: "Majesty's heroes aren't trying to win. They are responding to the environment based on their personality, intelligence and your rewards - which is why we refer to the game as a 'sim'. It is up to you to make the choices and motivate the heroes in such a way that you can defeat your opponent." As such, if those aforementioned rangers encounter a hostile creature they may decide to attack, but only if they consider themselves experienced enough. Afterwards, if you had the foresight to build a marketplace, they may find it necessary to take a break from exploration and return to town to purchase a health potion or two.

**"Heroes whose loyalty to you is faltering may be tempted to turn traitor..."**

## Let's take this outside

"The AI for the heroes is incredibly complex," asserts Rob Caswell, Majesty's Producer. "The personalities for the heroes have been created by giving each of them a large list of possible things that they can choose to do. Each of those things is given a priority based on character class as well as on variables like intelligence or combat ability. So while most characters have similar lists of possible actions, it's the likelihood of them actually choosing to do those things that makes up their personalities."

With a large number of variables, there is a corresponding variety in unit types. Warriors feel obliged to patrol the town on the look out for approaching enemies, and while there they'll probably stop by the marketplace or blacksmith to equip themselves for combat. Since they're confident types, if you place a reward on a certain monster it's highly likely a nearby warrior will attempt to slay it. Indicative of the slight but significant distinction between units, there's a special class of warrior who call themselves the Warriors of Discord. These guys are as thick as two bricks, basically. They simply live for combat; when they're not engaged in a fight they're out looking to start one.

While the heroes possess distinct personalities, they still need sufficient motivation to perform tasks. Of course, nothing attracts a medieval fantasy hero like a chest brimming with gold, but sometimes even that isn't enough. To hang onto power a sovereign relies upon the loyalty of his people - lose that and you probably won't have a head for too much longer.

Rewards can be claimed by any




**Place an Attack flag on the hippies at Stonehenge.**




**Spells are one aspect over which the player has complete control.**





Temples, blacksmiths, libraries and markets keep your town running smoothly.

hero, so your opponent could decide to place a bounty on the assassination of your most powerful monk. Heroes whose loyalty to you is wavering may be tempted to turn traitor and indulge in a bit of friendly fire. Again, though, the hero's personality comes into the equation: "A paladin will never consider attacking heroes or buildings in her own kingdom, but those pesky rogues may do so for the right price," smiles Rob, with a wicked glint in his eye. "Not only that, but they might also start pilfering from your marketplace every now and then. They ARE rogues, after all."

## Show me the magic

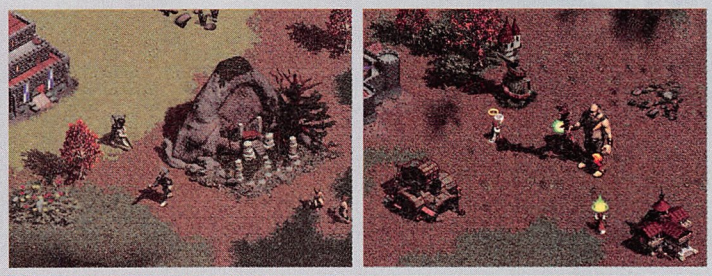
Bearing the above sort of behaviour in mind, it's perhaps fortunate that the player will have the ability to cast an assortment of spells, in the process providing the game's rare moments of direct control. "The player has always been viewed as being a benevolent ruler with access to powerful magic through the guilds," reasons Jay. "We've kept that in mind through the entire development process and, at the same time, made sure to steer clear of anything that might give the player too much control over the heroes."

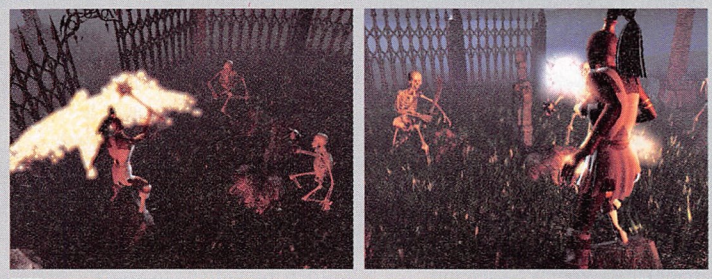
The Warriors' Guild, for example, confers the ability to cast a Call To Arms spell that immediately returns all associated warriors back to that particular guild. Useful when the town is under enemy bombardment, I suspect. All the spells tend to fulfil similar complementary roles: you can hurl lightning bolts at enemies and heal or even resurrect heroes. Essentially, the spells are there to provide assistance to your heroes, but not to dominate them.

In fact, this theme of support could be the most important factor in determining Majesty's success. As the player is there to support the heroes, this relationship fosters an emotional intimacy that's quite beyond the majority of number-crunching strategy games already available. Jay agrees that this is definitely a good thing: "We want you to think more about supporting your units than just building as many of them as you can. Sometimes you may find yourself concentrating on the acts of a particular hero, but that's normally because you've developed an attachment to it - she's MY 10th level paladin - and want to see how it's doing."

By now it should be obvious that the foremost aspect of Cyberlore's design philosophy for Majesty is to let the heroes take centre stage. In this sense, it's not unlike The Sims from Maxis. Both games are about the creation of virtual worlds and virtual populations that, in doing so, are attempting to push AI in new and fascinating directions. With Majesty, at least now you'll know that when those little blokes get stuck behind a tree, it's because they actually wanted to.

*David Wildgoose*





Majesty aims to be that rare strategy game where you really care for your people.

# X-COM: ALI

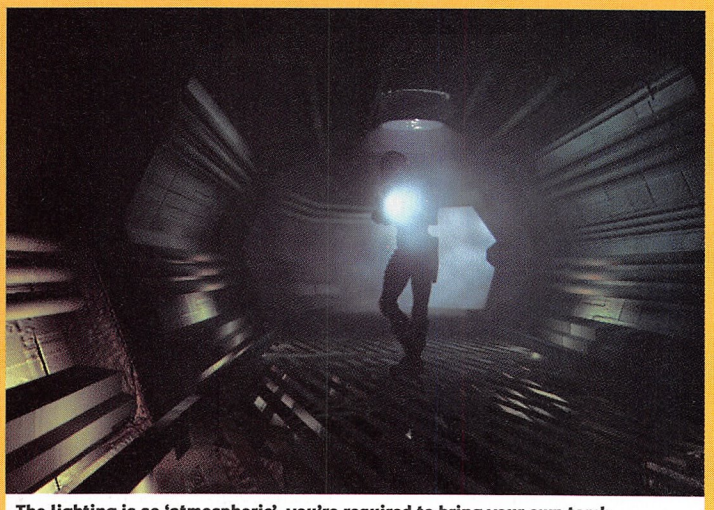
Squad-based strategy comes of age with this groundbreaking sequel.

## DETAILS

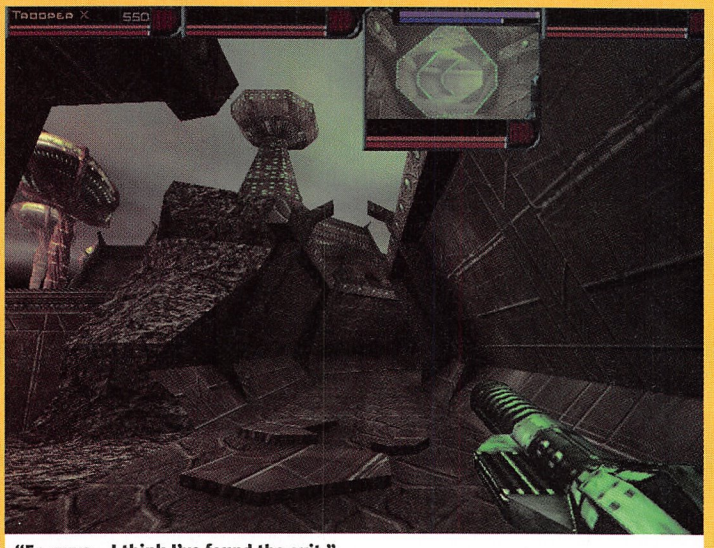
- **Genre:** 1st person Strategy
- **Players:** 1-4
- **Developer:** Microprose
- **Publisher:** Hasbro
- **Due:** Mid 2000







The lighting is so 'atmospheric', you're required to bring your own torch.




"Er, guys... I think I've found the exit."

Spanning half a decade, the X-COM trilogy represents the pinnacle of tactical squad-based strategy gaming. From the turn-based UFO: Enemy Unknown (X-COM: UFO Defense in the US) to the real-time X-COM: Apocalypse, these titles remain among many gamers all-time favourites. Microprose are now producing a fourth title, X-COM: Alliance, with which they hope to resurrect the addictive and immersive gameplay of its forebears.

### Must be aliens

Set in 2063, Alliance centres on the ordeal of the UGS Patton, a research ship en route to Cydonia, which is inexplicably teleported to an unknown sector of the galaxy. With a crew comprised of mostly scientists and only a skeleton contingent of troopers, returning to earth as expeditiously as possible is of the utmost priority. The matter is further complicated when the Patton's crew find themselves embroiled in a battle between old enemies and a new, previously undiscovered, alien species.

In many ways, X-COM: Alliance will be a groundbreaking title. One aspect that has undergone a radical change is the angle from which it will be played. With the exception of Interceptor, the X-COM series has traditionally employed a third-person, isometric perspective. Alliance will change all this with a shift to the first-person view. An immediate advantage of this will be the elimination of that detachment from the action that is part and parcel of all third-person isometric titles. Instead, the player will adopt the role of a squad leader, commanding his fellow team members using an extremely flexible mouse-based interface. An intelligent, content-sensitive cursor will enable the player to order individuals to attack adversaries, explore specific areas, interact with environmental objects and pick up and drop items. Those familiar with the similar system utilised by Sierra's SWAT 3 will feel right at home.

### Unreal action

In licensing the Unreal engine, the developers have made a wise decision. While initially expensive, this course of action has cut down development time significantly, thanks to the Unreal engine's power, flexibility and stability. Not content to merely use a vanilla incarnation of the engine, Microprose are heavily modifying it to meet their needs. At time of writing, approximately 40% of Alliance's code is legacy code, with the other 60% having been programmed from scratch.

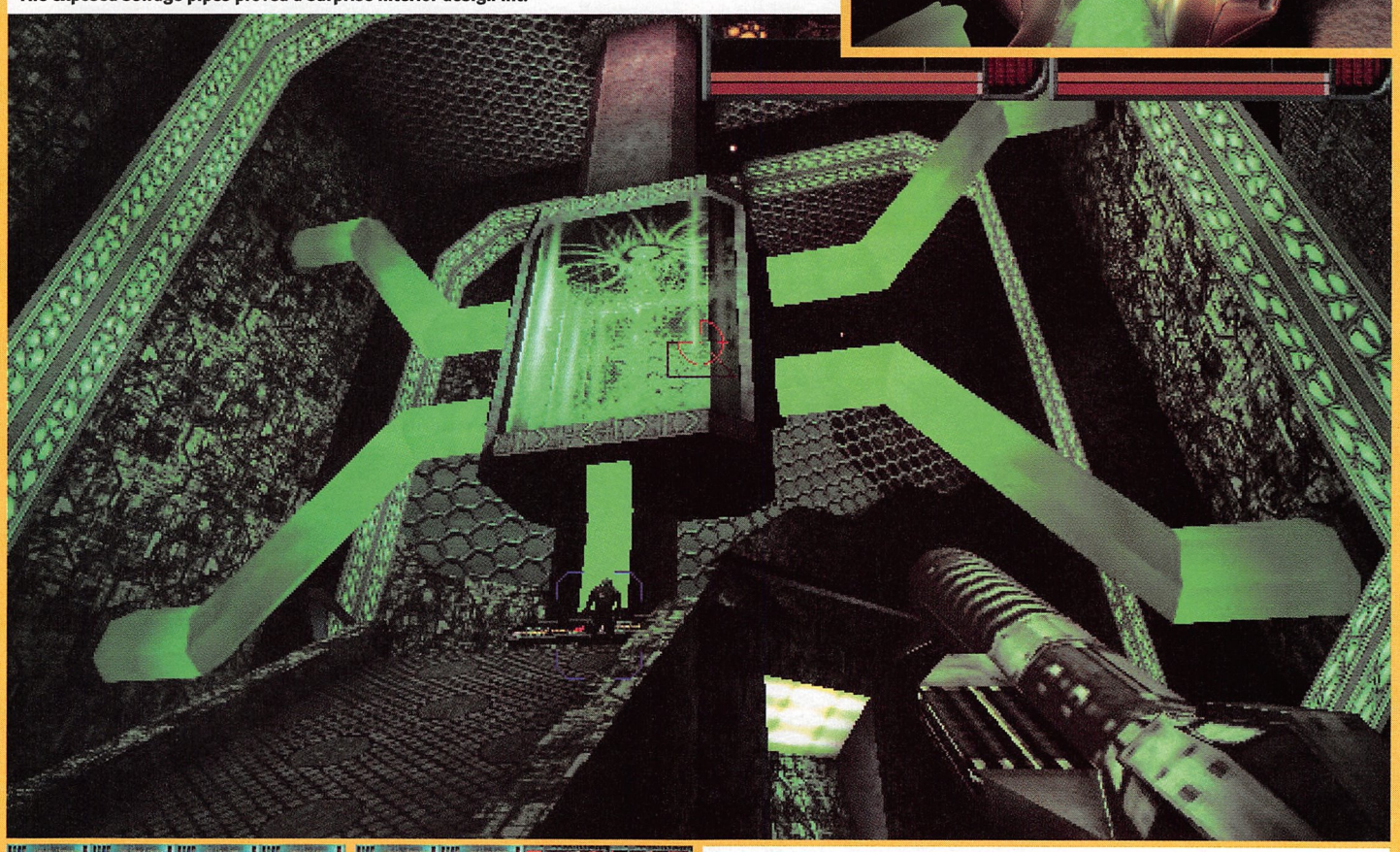
**"Enemy aliens will steal weapons from injured squad members..."**

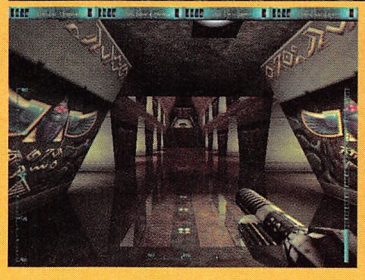
While these changes may alarm hardcore X-COM enthusiasts, Microprose is adamant that Alliance will stay true to its roots. Many gamers felt that Terror from the Deep and Apocalypse lacked the character and definition of the original. Harking back to Enemy Unknown, Alliance will see a return to the fundamental principles of discovery and troop management. The absence of a bottomless coffer of financial resources will also see an increase in the emphasis on research and development. In first-person shooters, the player finds weapons and, barring any absence of ammunition, immediately puts them to good use. X-COM: Alliance will allow players to do this, though those who take the weapon back to the lab boys will reap the benefits in the long run. Researching a weapon's capabilities will restrict its immediate availability, but will yield extremely useful information and the possible discovery of previously undiscovered functions.

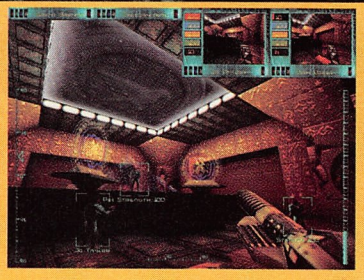
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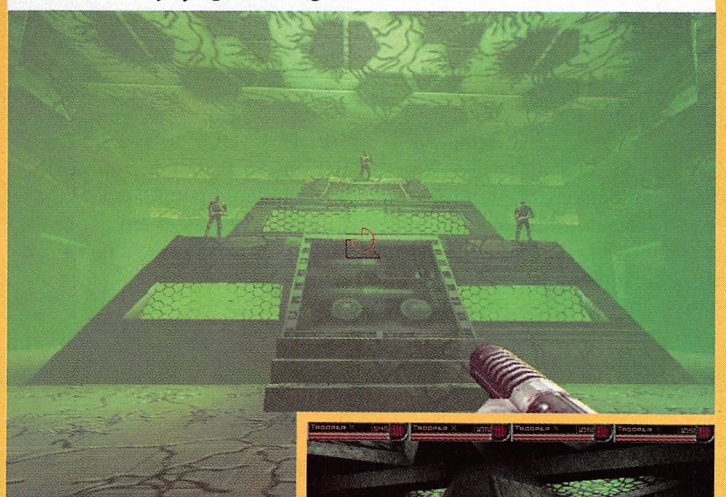
The exposed sewage pipes proved a surprise interior design hit.

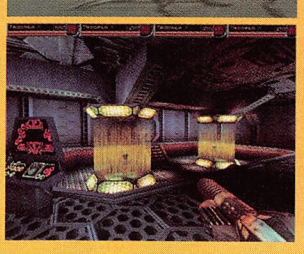






The X-Com team play a game of King of the Hill.







## Tired and emotional

Thanks to Alliance's incredible AI, the player will also see the tables turned in the R&D stakes. Enemy aliens will steal weapons from injured squad members, returning them to their own labs where they'll be researched then used against the player. Much more terrifying is the fact that they will also drag the player's comrades back to their research labs, where a truly horrific fate awaits. The AI will model physical effects like encumbrance, stamina and fatigue, as well as fear, paranoia, rage and other emotions for both humans and aliens. Tired or panicky squadmates may lag behind a retreating group or hesitate to fire at a crucial moment. Enemies will take advantage of this, targeting the weakest team members for extermination or capture. The technologically superior aliens are ruthlessly efficient at this systematic dismantling of the player's team, making them truly frightening adversaries.

Sadly, X-COM fans have over six months to wait before X-COM: Alliance's release. But, by all indications, Alliance is shaping up to be a very impressive title indeed.

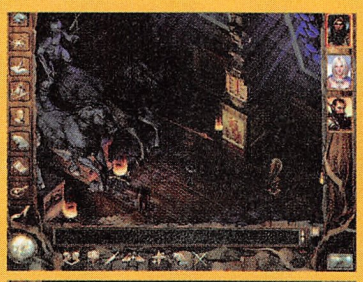
***Brett Robinson***

# ICEWIND DALE

Dungeon romping done with style.

## DETAILS

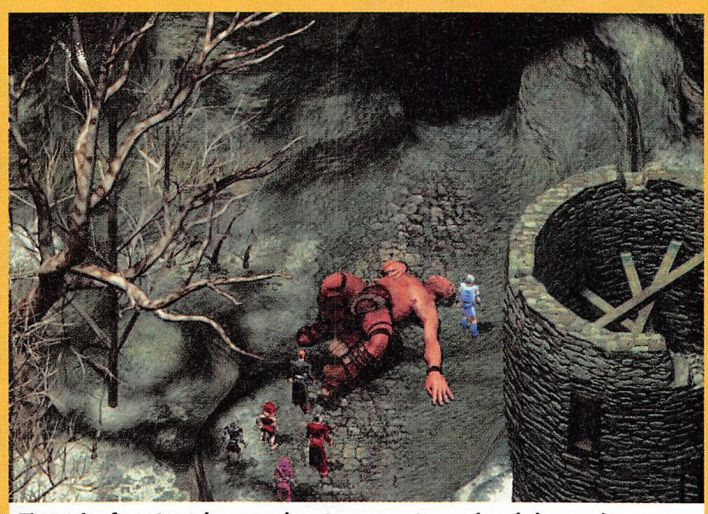
- **Genre:** Dungeon hack RPG
- **Players:** 1-6
- **Developer:** Black Isle Studios
- **Publisher:** Interplay
- **Due:** 3rd Qtr. 2000



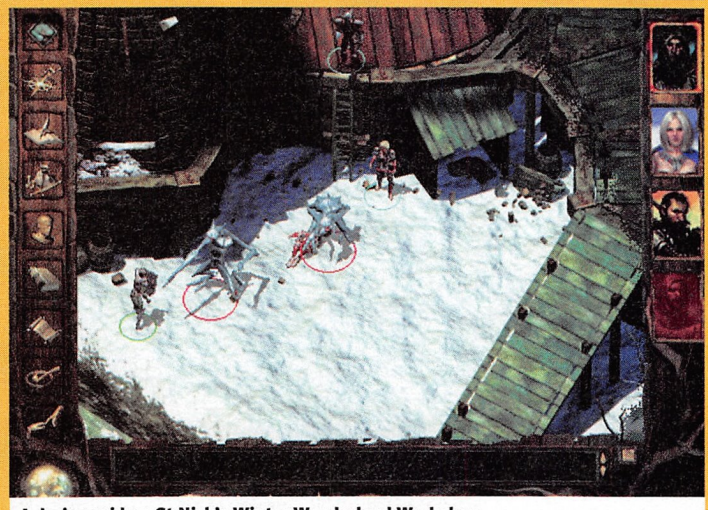








The scale of creatures in comparison to your party members is impressive.



A daring raid on St Nick's Winter Wonderland Workshop.



There aren't too many certainties in life, but when playing an RPG you can quite comfortably count on one thing: you will partake in a romp through at least one dark, dank, and particularly dangerous dungeon. There are many reasons why people approach a dungeon with gay abandon - most feature an abundance of challenging (and interesting) creatures to battle, a bit of mystery, and definitely the odd surprise or two. Primarily though, dungeon's entice players simply with the promise of a great big piles of powerful items and lots of glittering gold.

This particular aspect proved so popular in the past that many developers buggered the above-ground sections and set entire RPGs within the confines of said dark, dank and dangerous enclosed spaces. Look no further than Dungeon Master and Ultima Underworld for proof.

Though highly regarded, such titles were hardly best-sellers. That such an innovative idea wasn't well received was perplexing - and developers reluctantly withdrew from this style of RPG. Then Diablo came along and changed everything. Set almost entirely underground, Diablo was an absolute monster hit and still maintains a huge following online. It was more the successful marriage of basic RPG elements (like stat advancement and the acquisition of items, weapons and armour) with a strong action element that was the genesis of its successes. But being the big bad dungeon romp that it was certainly had a lot to do with it too. And its only criticisms - at least by the RPG faithful - that the environments were dull and repetitive and the gameplay just a tad too simplistic to be rewarding in the long run.

**"...will feature over fifty new monsters."**

### Baldur's Gate 1.5

Icewind Dale, then, is the RPG to watch for if you're interested in dungeon hacking with a bit more substance. Developers Black Isle Studios (the Icewind Dale development team is complimented by various Fallout 2 and Planescape Torment team members) are building a highly detailed RPG based around eight major underground areas of Icewind Dale (a location made famous by Robert Salvatore and his trilogy of AD&D books published by Wizards of the Coast). And they're well aware of the pitfalls of setting a game almost entirely within dungeons - so they've procured BioWare's almighty Infinity engine, the same that powered the highly regarded Baldur's Gate.

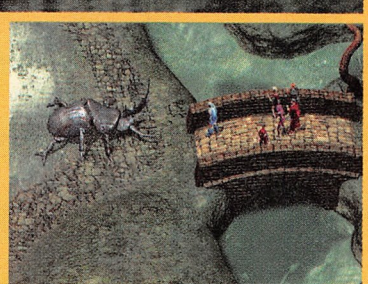
A wise decision for a variety of reasons. Firstly, as the Infinity engine has the 2nd Edition AD&D rule set built in, Black Isle have a powerful set of tools to help create a comprehensive and detailed RPG experience. And since the technology has already been developed, an added benefit is an almost exclusive focus on enhancing story and gameplay elements.

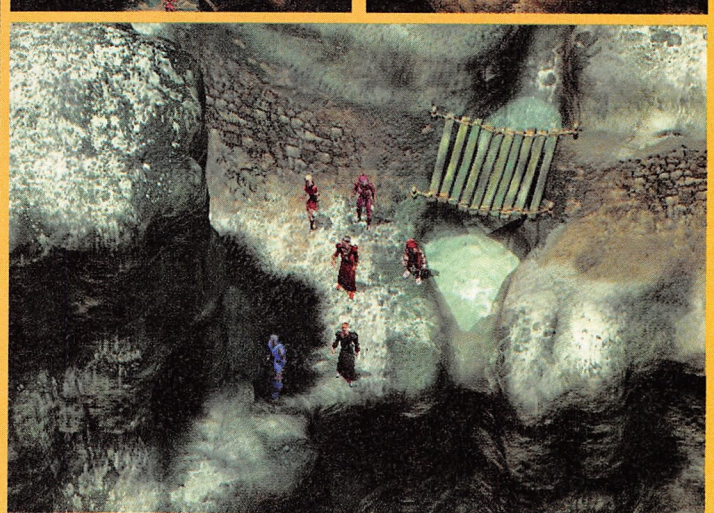
Secondly, the Infinity engine makes use of pre-rendered back drops instead of the limiting and repetitive tile system (where designers "build" the game world with small texture areas). So the artists have free reign to create some absolutely stunning game environments. Rather than dull and repetitive dungeons made up of plenty of light grey and black textures, Icewind Dale will feature eight unique dungeon types. Ranging from ice-filled mountain passes that lead to steamy geothermal caves, to haunted Elven ruins to tunnels carved through the heart of a living glacier, Black Isle have generated some of the most impressive

(below left) And the room was cleared when Leopold said "My dog's got no nose..."









And a quick dip in the pool was in order. If only they'd come prepared...

underground environments ever seen in an RPG. Dull and repetitive? Never.

## Monstrous monsters

Other than the obvious focus on the underworld of Icewind Dale, one other particular aspect that will be extremely conspicuous to those familiar with Baldur's Gate (or even Diablo) - the enemy models. While the on-screen size of characters is comparable to those seen in Baldur's Gate, the scale of certain beasties in comparison has been significantly increased. So when you come across a giant beetle, for example, it will take up a good quarter of the screen and absolutely dwarf your party of characters. The effect, whilst purely cosmetic, is rather impressive. And as their quality has been increased, so has their quantity. Icewind Dale will feature over fifty new monsters.

Icewind Dale will appeal to gamers that aren't looking for an epic RPG along the lines of Baldur's Gate nor an action-oriented one in the vein of Diablo. This RPG should fall somewhere in between.

*Hendry Saunders*

# DICK JOHNSON

## It's Bathurst! It's Ford vs Holden! It's Dick Johnson! You bloody beauty! Er... hang on, where are the Holdens?

**DETAILS**

- **Genre:** Touring Car Sim
- **Players:** 1
- **Developer:** Torus
- **Publisher:** HES
- **Due:** Soon

Ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls, the moment we have all been waiting for is just around the corner! Too long have we waited patiently for an Australian Touring Car sim, but now I'm happy to announce our long sojourn is almost at an end. In an attempt to woo the local market, a group of Aussie developers are working hard to provide that authentic racing feel with a distinctly Aussie flavour: Dick Johnson V8 Challenge.

### Benchmarks

Every genre of the PC gaming world has its own particular standards, and with each new title that surpasses these standards, a new benchmark becomes apparent. To understand this, simply look at the first person shooter genre. First there was Doom followed by Doom II. These titles set the benchmark for FPS when released. However, when the world first witnessed Duke Nukem, the stakes were raised and a new champion was crowned, and this trend has continued on with games like Quake and Half-Life. At this point in time, the sim that sets the benchmark within "Touring Car" orientated racing sims is clearly TOCA 2. Though not quite complete, we were informed by the publishers that the version of DJVC that we tested was very close to the final product. Thus, the question must now be asked; "Does Dick Johnson V8 Challenge measure up to the likes of TOCA 2?" The answer sadly, is no.

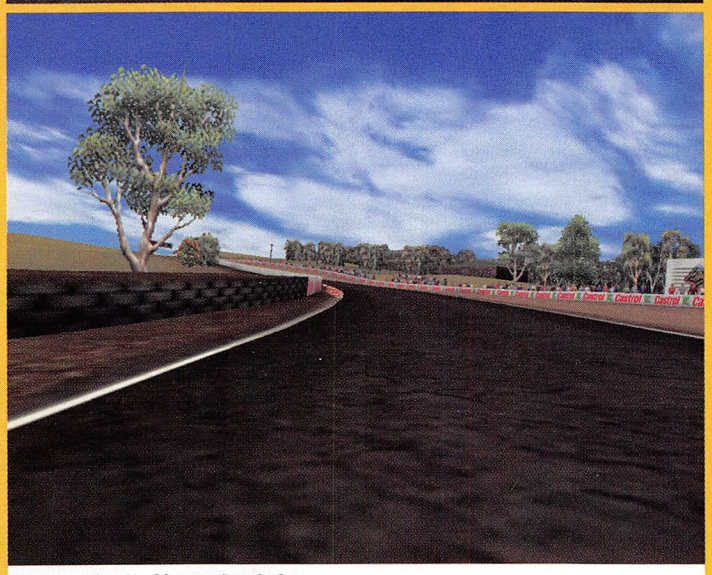
Outstandingly blatant upon first investigation of DJVC is an overwhelming arcadey feel about the game. The front end is extremely basic and provides only the most primitive of options, offering resolution changes, minor graphical adjustments, single and seasonal race modes plus the typical car and track selections. Of all the 1999 Australian Touring Car teams available, the most notable absence is that of the HSV Holden Racing Team, a tragic exclusion for any Australian Touring Car based game. There are also only four tracks included: Oran Park, Ipswich Raceway, Sandown and the legendary Bathurst. According to the developers, all the tracks apart from Ipswich were recreated with the help of satellite imagery data and, vouching from personal experience, the accuracy of Oran Park and Mount Panorama is extremely high.

### Fishtailing

The true test of any racing sim is to actually jump behind the wheel and burn some rubber and, initially, DJVC appears to emulate the experience well. However, there are a few obvious shortcomings. Most notable is the exclusion of the ability to adjust the vehicle set-up. All cars must be driven stock standard, which detracts immensely from the realism of the title. Also whilst driving, all cars react badly to sudden changes in elevation (a feature predominant at the top sections of Bathurst) - as a steep corner or bump in the road is traversed, the car fishtails aggressively and quite often crashes into a barrier, spoiling any decent lap time. This merely enforces the need for some kind of set-up option.

**"All cars are gorgeous to look at and the tracks are very attractive..."**



Bathurst in all of its rendered glory.

Additionally frustrating is the lack of any tyre screeching sound whilst cornering. When driving a virtual car, you feel no sense of inertia, and this makes it difficult to judge speed through corners; thus the only way of telling when you're pushing too hard, or too little as the case may be, is this critical sound effect. Its absence is deplorable.

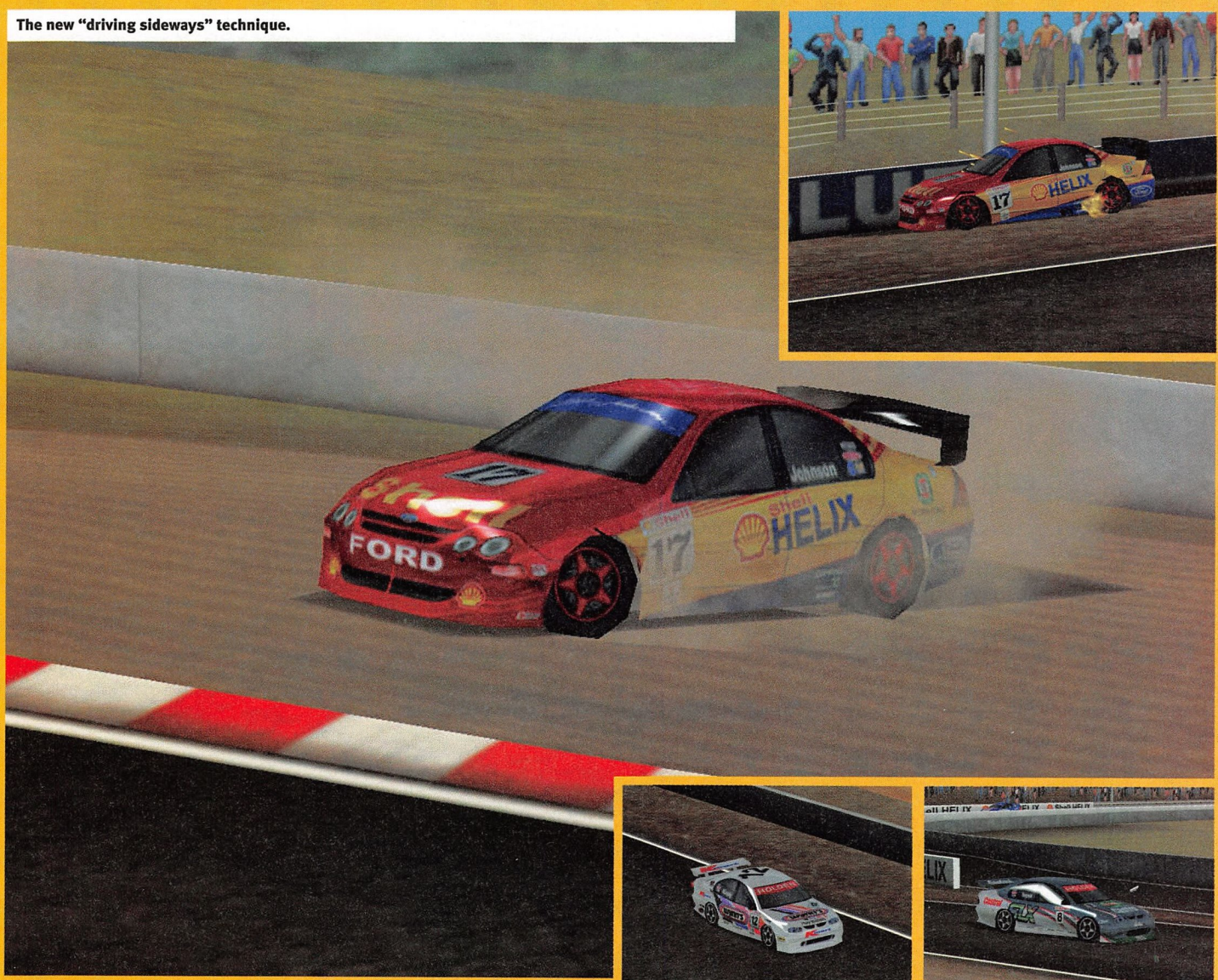
Graphically DJVC is yet again a little wanting. All cars are gorgeous to look at and the tracks themselves are very attractive. Yet while the textures used appear very representative of the real thing, extras like trees and shrubs are incorporated using simple flat textures. Additionally, the weather within the game is does not vary, thus the track condition is always bright and sunny, which is quite frankly not the case in real life.

With all these shortcomings, DJVC appears doomed to the low-end of the scale. However we have been told by the developers that critical changes will be made within the game - either prior to release or via a patch - which will address most of these issues. But, of course, we can only wait and see. At this stage, we have a game with plenty of potential, and with a some extra work could easily become a gem, though in its present state falls some way short of the current benchmark for racing sims.

***Edward Fox***

# V8 CHALLENGE

The new "driving sideways" technique.

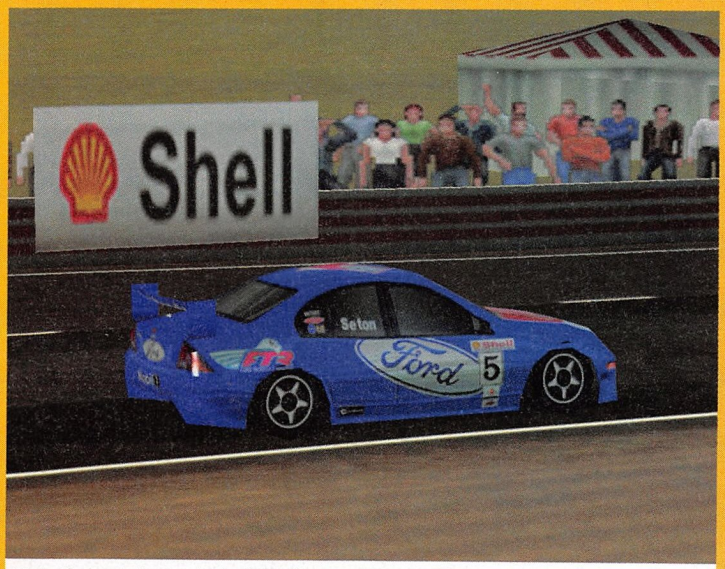













Note the conspicuous lack of Aussie paraphernalia in the crowd.

Gum trees!

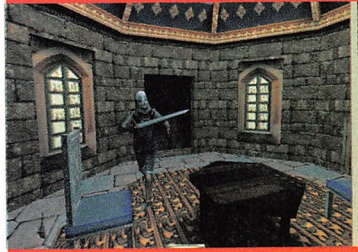


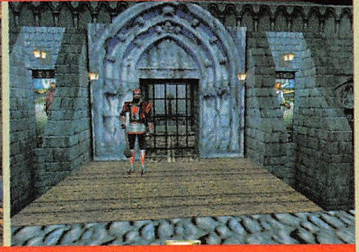
# SCORE LIST

## In a few months time, this won't fit on three pages. Yikes!

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**ONE YEAR AGO:** THIEF: THE DARK PROJECT





**QUIZ: Who is worshipped by the Order of the Hammer?**

**GOLD: Games scoring 90-94%** **PLATINUM: Games scoring 95-100%**

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**ONE YEAR AGO:** FALCON 4.0

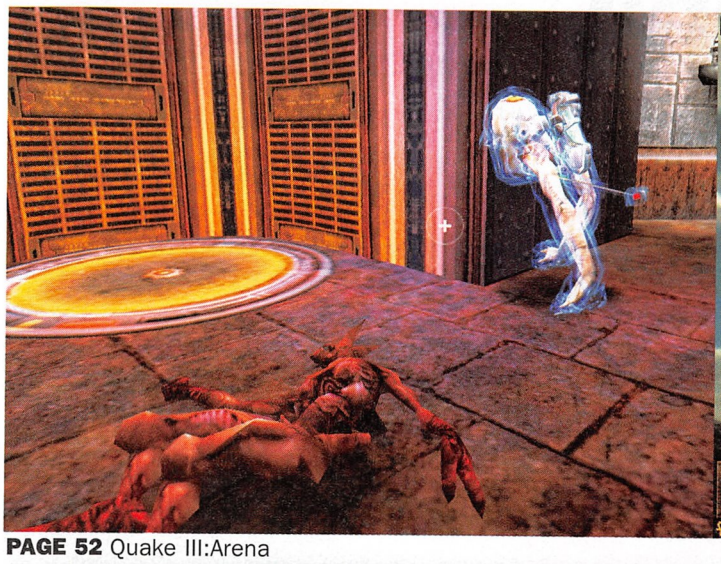


**QUIZ: The missions in Falcon 4.0 are situated in which part of the world?**

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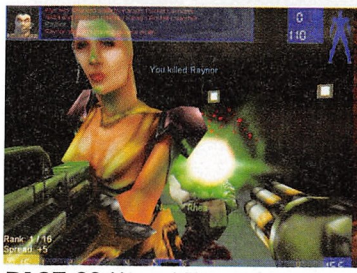
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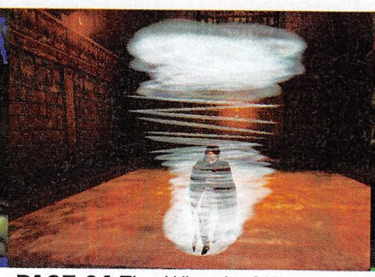
**PAGE 52** Quake III:Arena



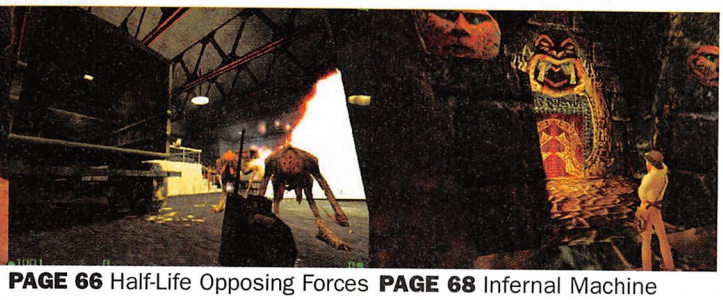
**PAGE 56** Ultima IX:Ascension



**PAGE 60** Unreal Tournament



**PAGE 64** The Wheel of Time



**PAGE 66** Half-Life Opposing Forces **PAGE 68** Infernal Machine

# Works In Progress

As per usual, the month of December saw game publishers release an astonishing number of titles in the hope of catching some of the pre-Christmas spending spree. We would estimate that at least one quarter of the year's releases hit the shelves during this period. Yet, ironically, the three biggest games reviewed this issue aren't finished yet.

Quake III: Arena, Ultima IX: Ascension, and Unreal Tournament are those three games, of course. And each one remains an incomplete game. Though, out of the box there is much enjoyment to be had from all three titles - to varying degrees, however, as reflected in our reviews. Yet it will only be in the coming months that the real potential inherent in each will be fully discovered and exploited. I'm not talking about how well the trio stand the test of time - this isn't about hindsight. Rather I'm suggesting that we view these games as "works in progress".

For Quake III and Unreal Tournament this progress will arrive in the shape of player-made modifications or mutations to the original game. Over the course of their peerless history, id Software has accumulated an incredible amount of support from the online community. This established fanbase has already begun work on designing maps, character models, and items for use in Q3A. Similarly, UT actually shipped with the tools necessary to modify the game code, resulting in slight or even radical alterations to the gameplay.

In stark contrast, the release of Ultima IX: Ascension is the perfect example of a publisher being forced to ship an unfinished game in order to meet its financial obligations. Origin has admitted that there simply wasn't enough time to optimise the D3D code, for example. At the time of print, one patch had already been issued, while a further two were already in the works. Given the current situation and EA's willingness to continue support, it would not surprise me if UA surpasses Daggerfall as the most patched game in recent memory.

If you had asked me at the start of 1999 which game I thought I would be playing come the end of the year, chances are my reply would have been Ultima IX. However, would you really be shocked to now hear that it's actually Quake III?

**David Wildgoose,**
**Staff Writer**

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## THE PC POWERPLAY SCORING SYSTEM

| | |
|---|---|
| 95%+ | PLATINUM The Best. Virtually faultless, reserved for games which cause loss of sleep from thinking of nothing else. |
| 90-94% | GOLD A classic. Either an unquestionable example of superiority within its genre, or a ground breaking game that'll be setting trends. |
| 80-90% | A strong, eminently playable game. Hard to fault and likely to still be on the hard drive in 6 month's time. |
| 60-80% | Competent and generally enjoyable. Flaws or mediocrity hold these games back from higher ratings. |
| 40-60% | Average and ordinary. Not bad, not good. Ideal gift. |
| 0-40% | Bad, really bad. Boring, shamelessly unoriginal, cheap and horrible. |

# Quake III: Arena

●**Genre:** First Person Shooter ●**Players:** 1-32 ●**Developer:** id Software ●**Publisher:** Activision ●**Distributor:** Activision ●**Price:** $89.95 ●**Rating:** MA15+ ●**Available:** Now
●**Need:** P266, 64MB RAM, 25MB HD space, 4MB 3D graphics card with OpenGL support ●**Want:** PIII 600, 256MB RAM, 600MB HD space ●**URL:** http://www.quake3arena.com

id's latest opus.

## TIPS

- Keep moving! You're not playing against a bunch of ignorant 'net geeks anymore, you're playing against bots, who are going to be smarter than you. So never stop moving, pick up everything you come across so that your enemies can't get their hands on the good stuff, and send a few scorching rockets up their asses.
- Don't use the Bounce Pads unnecessarily when you've got enemies around you. Especially if you know that these enemies have rail guns. While you're in the air you're a sitting duck to be railed, or sometimes even machine gunned to death. If you really need to use a Bounce Pad in a crowded situation, try and scatter anyone shooting at you with some well-placed rockets, or a spam-attack of grenades.
- When you're playing against a bot one-on-one, you should find the bot will always go to one area of the map, usually the area that's holding a significant powerup (Quad Damage, etc) or the most powerful weapon available. If you can get that powerup or that weapon before the bot, you're well on your way to dominating that arena.



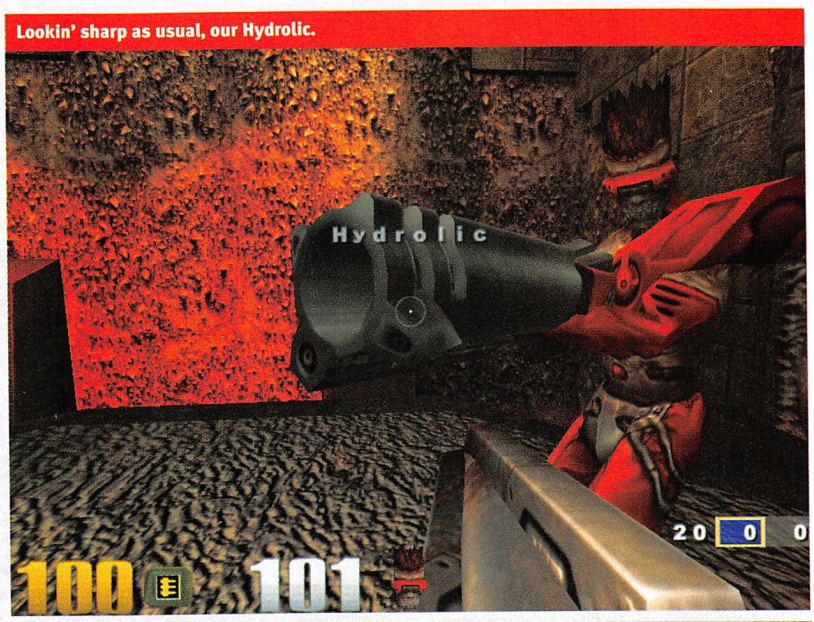

"Welcome to Quake III Arena" It's with these four words and one digit that you find yourself immersed in the surreal, yet strangely bright and almost "game-show" like world of Quake III Arena, one of the most highly anticipated releases, not just of 1999, but of all time.

Most of you would have either played the Q3A Test that was released a few months ago, or at least played the official demo of the game. In fact, I'd guess that most of you reading this review already have the game, but those of you who are waiting for confirmation before you purchase, here it is: go get it.

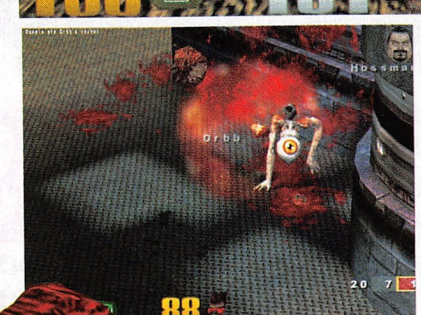
For the few of you who aren't sure what all the fuss is about, Quake III: Arena is the third game in the insanely popular Quake franchise. However, even though it's "Quake 3", it's not really what you'd call a sequel. There's no real storyline that follows on from Quake II, in fact there's no real storyline at all. Quake III: Arena is all about one thing - hard and fast multiplayer action and fragging the hell out of your opponents (either humans or "bots"). There's no true "story", no one to rescue, no new worlds that need exploring or saving. All that needs to be explored is your opponent's intestines, and the only thing that needs to be saved is your own ass. Or as it says so helpfully in the manual: "Frag Everything That Isn't You".

### Running Man

If you think that Quake III Arena is only for gamers who are into multiplayer action and that id are abandoning the single player fans, you're wrong. Even though the game is all about fragging bots, if you think of it more along the lines of a "Running Man" style game show rather than just a bunch of



Lookin' sharp as usual, our Hydrolic.















The "walking on water" cheat in action.







Quad damage versus the power shield. We'd take the quad any day.







multiplayer levels strung together you'd be on the right track.

The "story" that holds Q3A together is that the Vadrigar, the "Arena Masters", constructed the Arena Eternal and stocked it with the finest gladiators of all time (this means you), purely for their own amusement. To progress from arena to arena (the Arena Eternal is split into six tiers of four arenas each) you need to win each level outright, including defeating a "boss" in a straight one-on-one dogfight at the end of each tier.

## Pulsating lights

As mentioned before, Q3A has a distinct "game show" feel to the way the game is played, and also in the look of each level. Even though the whole gothic feel from the first two Quake's is still evident, Q3A has layed off the dark, brooding atmosphere and replaced it with a bit of a brighter feel. New additions such as pulsating laser beams, bright green and purple powerups and weapon boxes, and even pastel - that's right, pastel - neon lighting makes you think that once you've finished a particular level you'll have Ian Turpie at your side offering a chance to win a Subaru.

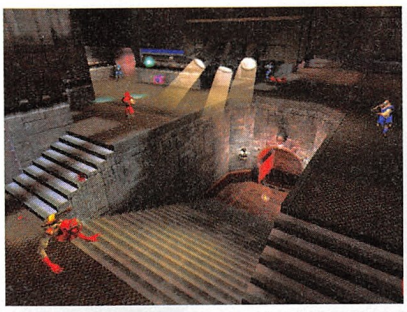
## Excellent level design

Each level has been excellently designed with deathmatching in mind, with plenty of wide-open spaces for frantic gibbing, sniper spots for picking players off, and even the occasional area for a good old-fashioned campsite. Some levels are actually too "camper friendly" though, especially the ones where you can get a good shot on someone coming down from a Bounce Pad - just aim a rocket at the spot where they're going to land and they're cactus.

The early levels in the game are actually very small, and are made up of only a few rooms, or a fairly compressed outdoor setting. You're only going against one or two bots in these levels, but it's still fairly strange to be deathmatching in these crammed environments. Once you start getting up to the third and forth tier (and beyond), you'll find the arenas more like the deathmatch levels you're used to. That said, the sixth tier is like nothing you'd have seen before. Set in space and full of Bounce Pads, these arenas are probably the best maps in QIII. If you fancy yourself with the rail gun you'll love these levels as the sight of lots of enemies all floating helplessly in the air makes for great target practice with some hot uranium slugs.

**"...take down an Orbb or three in the blink of an eye."**

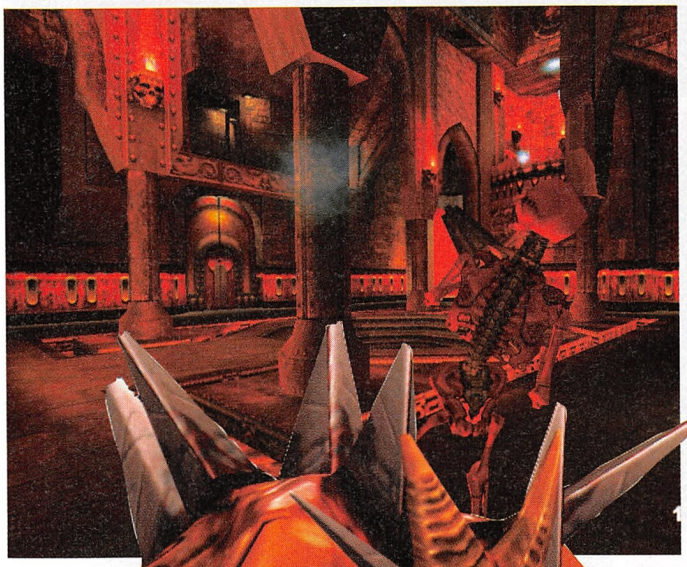
A minor problem with the levels is that without a very high-end PC, some








Q3A's stunning level design. Here we have the diving board above the outdoor swimming pool.






The lightning gun. Here Hydrolic e-enacts a scense from Ghostbusters.



of the arenas are really going to chug on your machine (even with some of the effects turned off). So it's either upgrade time or just stick to some of the earlier, less spectacular levels when you're deathmatching.

## Bot factory

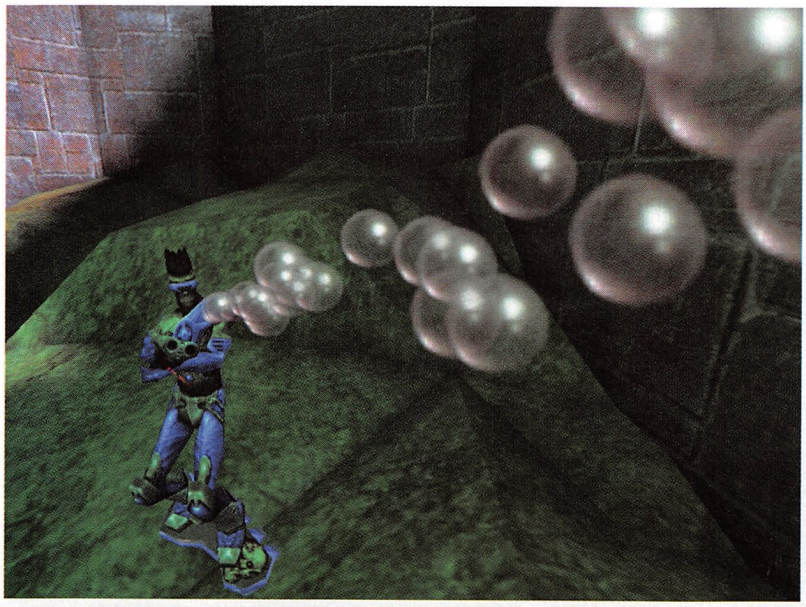
Also, in some of the boss levels where it's just you versus a single bot, the bot AI (or lack of) can make it very easy to pick up some cheap kills. Just hang around where the most powerful weapon or powerup is and wait for the bot to come blindly running into the room, at which point you can get gibby.

Generally though, the bots are awesome to play against. The line between human intelligence and CPU AI just got a little blurrier. Each bot has a very high level of Quake intelligence, and they look bloody excellent as well. Sometimes it almost feels like a shame to frag them (note the word "almost").

An excellent aspect to the bots is that they're not all human looking. There are a few that have a totally bizarre flavour to them, along with a nice selection of humans, humanoid robots and cybronic humans. There's one bot in particular named "Orbb", which is an Alien Cybronic Contstruct, that has become an office favourite. Orbb is basically a giant eyeball with two legs, with his weapons mounted on top of the eyeball. When playing as Orbb, though, you miss out on his highly amusing range of shrieks and cries. He's a damn funny opponent.

Some other cool bots include: Bones, who is basically a glow-in-the-dark skeleton, but still produces oodles of gibs; Slash, a LA rollerblading cyborg; Mynx, an adult movie star masquerading as a Quake bot; and finally Doom, who just happens to be the soldier from everyone's favourite first-person shooter (no, not Wolfenstein 3D).

While the AI of the bots is top class, there are a few instances where it just gets silly. For example, there seems to be some sort of "catch up" mode in Q3A that's generally reserved






for sports games - you know the drill, the CPU will either play like a madman in the last few mins to make it close, or if you're behind then you'll find the CPU easing off to help you get back in the game. Thankfully, you can turn the handicap off once you start acquiring some skill. You can also change the difficulty level. If you're winning every round, then of course you'll increase the difficulty. If you're losing all the time, then you'd drop it down a notch - there's no real need to do it artificially.

Another AI quirk - on the Nightmare difficulty level (which is designed to be as tough as a pair of King Gee shorts), the bots hardly EVER miss, even with the machine gun. And don't even think of using a Bounce Pad or you'll be instantly railed.

## The BFG is back!

The weapons in Q3A can be described in one word - exceptional. From the Gauntlet through to the BFG-10K (well, maybe not the Gauntlet), there is something here for everyone. Even the "weakest" projectile weapon, the machine gun, has enough power to take down an Orbb or three in the blink of an eye. Thankfully you can change between weapons in the blink of an eye as well, so throwing a few rockets into a crowd and mopping up the leftovers with some plasma is a very simple task.

One thing that I did notice had "evolved" from Q3Test through to the finished game was that the rocket launcher, generally regarded as the default weapon of choice for Quakers, seemed to have it's blast radius enlarged. In the demo, there was very little splash damage when using this weapon, now however, each rocket really bounces your opponents around. The rail gun still rocks, with its one-hit-kill policy, but I think everyone will admit that the BFG-10K is THE weapon to use, despite the fact that it doesn't exactly appear on every second map (and it's usually extremely well hidden too). A "super plasma" gun, it is your only choice when you "absolutely, positively got to kill every motherf**ker in the room" to quote Samuel L. Jackson.

## ACCELERATION PADS & BOUNCE PADS

**These two nifty little devices are a major addition to Q3A's gameplay.** The Acceleration Pads turn you into Michael Jordan, sending you flying through the air (in a lateral direction) for a few seconds. Most Acceleration Pads are used to navigate over a large area of lava or other nasty substance.

The Bounce Pads act like "rocket jump boosters". If you walk over one of these you get projected in the air much like you would if you executed a rocket jump. Some Bounce Pads launch you a few feet in the air, some will launch you four stories up. Just make sure you've got enough health so you don't crater on the way down.



**So is Quake III: Arena really the ultimate jumpy-jumpy platformer?**

## The Ultimate

When all is said and done, the dust has settled and the gibs mopped up, Quake III: Arena is the ultimate first-person shooter that we were all expecting. Of course it's going to be compared and contrasted with Unreal Tournament, but trying to compare these two games is like trying to decide who's better - Elle Macpherson or Cindy Crawford. You simply can't do it - they're both equally exquisite. There are a few minor issues with QIII's sometimes-cheap bot AI, but they're only noticeable because the rest of the game is almost flawless. If you don't have Quake III :Arena yet, go get it now... oh, but don't forget to upgrade your PC on the way home as well.

*Ewan Corness*



### PLUS

*http://www.q3arenanoise.com/*

If you really can't get enough Quake III: Arena action, then this could be right up your alley - the Quake III: Arena soundtrack (not to be confused with any soundtrack featuring Tina Arena)! The media release on the webpage states that the "music is an aggressive blend of electronica, break beats and intense guitars." Good-o.



PCPP

**FOR:** It's Quake III Arena and it's an id game.

**AGAINST:** Some occasionally cheap bot AI, need a damn fast PC if you want to avoid any choppiness.

**93**

# Ultima IX: Ascension

●**Genre:** (Unfinished) Epic 3D RPG ●**Players:** 1 ●**Developer:** Origin ●**Publisher:** Electronic Arts ●**Distributor:** Electronic Arts ●**Price:** $99.95 ●**Rating:** M ●**Available:** Now
●**Need:** PII 266, 64 MB RAM, 700MB HD, 8MB 3D Card ●**Want:** PIII 700, 512MB RAM, 2GB HD, 64MB 3D Card ●**URL:** www.ultima-ascension.com

Will the longest running computer game series end with a bang... or a whimper?

## TIPS

- **SAVE AS OFTEN AS POSSIBLE:** at least once every ten minutes! Unexpected crashes will ruin your day, particularly if you last saved 4 hours ago. Don't make the mistake of constantly saving over older saved games either. Saved game files are extremely prone to corruption and won't work at all if this happens.
- If you're in need of a quick hundred or so pieces of gold, seek out the Giant Crabs common in coastal areas. While their upper carapace is impenetrable, their bellies are very susceptible to a few good stabs with a sword. Those who have circle strafing down to an art will find it extremely useful in avoiding those lethal claws.
- Don't attack defenceless creatures or NPCs. Doing so is bad karma, which results in a reduction in your Intelligence and, consequently, a reduction in your maximum Mana level.

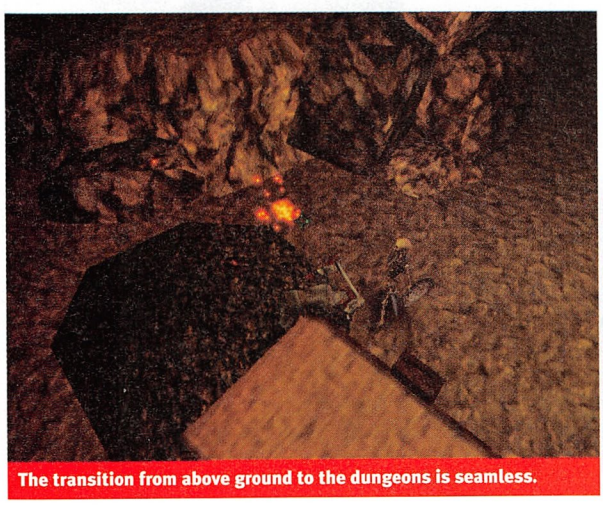


It's not often that a game enters the record books prior to its release, but Ultima IX: Ascension has done so as a game that has undergone perhaps the longest development cycle ever. Whether or not it has been worth the wait is a matter for vigorous debate, making for one of the most difficult reviews this contributor has ever had to write.

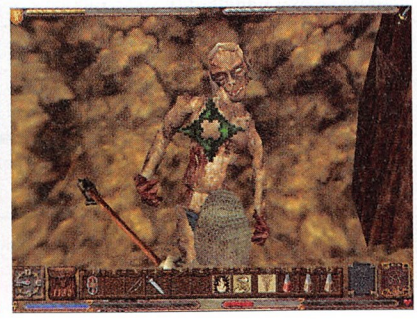
One of the longest running series in gaming history, Ultima's widely varied incarnations have captivated gamers for two decades. The series also exists as one of the most accurate barometers of the industry's evolution since the late seventies. Akalabeth, Richard "Lord British" Garriott's text-only RPG and first ever title, sold over 30,000 copies - a phenomenal number in those formative years of the gaming industry. The earliest Ultimas were played from a third-person, eye-in-the-sky perspective, while the Ultima Underworld games broke new ground when they entered the first-person domain. Ultima VIII introduced a number of changes considered far more radical than its shift to an isometric perspective, many of its action leanings regarded as implicitly negative by a vocal majority of Ultima aficionados.

### Bake bread!

Ascension is representative of further change in the series, employing a third-person, over-the-shoulder perspective within a completely three-dimensional world. And what a world it is! In this respect, Origin has well and truly delivered the goods, undeniably living up to their slogan: "We Create Worlds". In all honesty, there aren't enough adjectives in a thesaurus to adequately describe the immersive qualities and the sumptuous details of Ascension's environments. That they're the most incredible and interactive game environments ever is incontrovertible. A dynamic time and weather system delivers a day/night cycle that runs like clockwork, and varying weather conditions depending



The transition from above ground to the dungeons is seamless.



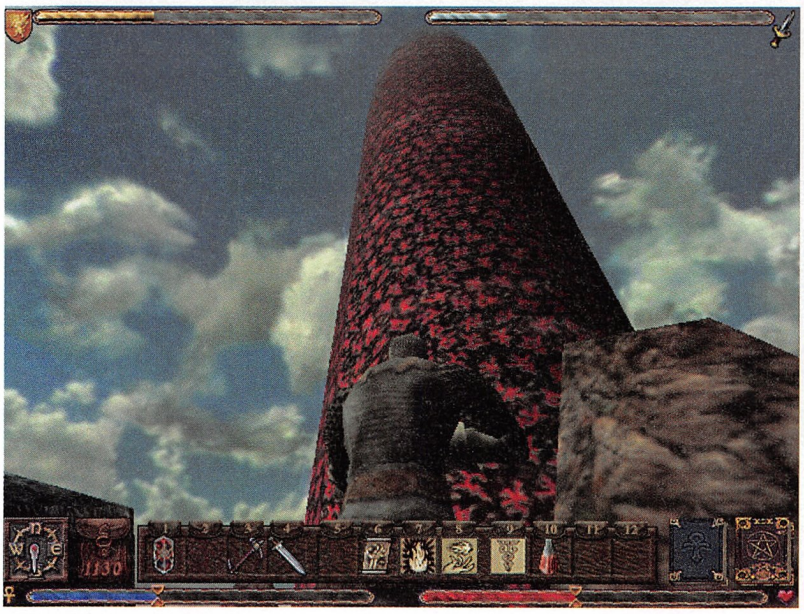


## WILL IT PLEASE THE TRADITIONALISTS?

**"Can Ascension be considered a true Ultima?" is a question posed by many die-hard fans.** To a large extent the answer is "yes". Those irrational fears of Ascension proving to be nothing more than a Tomb Raider clone have long since been laid to rest. That said, there are still some aspects that reduce the clarity of the answer somewhat. From the beginning of its development, Ascension has been tailored to cater to the whims of the loyal fans, some of whom have been playing the games from day one. However, Origin has made a number of concessions to those who are new to the series. While many of these are tolerable, one particular incident within the game has set the fan forums abuzz with scathing criticisms of the direction that the series has taken. From the Quest of the Avatar onward, the Ultima series embraced the concept of the eight virtues of Justice, Valour, Humility, Spirituality, Sacrifice, Honour, Honesty and Compassion. Thus, for many Ultima devotees, witnessing the Avatar ask, "What are the virtues?" of an NPC is extremely distressing and downright insulting. As to whether successive Ultimas will continue to be "watered down", or whether there will in fact be more Ultimas, only time will tell.



Dialogue varies from good to awful.



Spellbinding bugs are the bane of Ascension.



**"The game's minimum reqs are an outlandish fabrication..."**

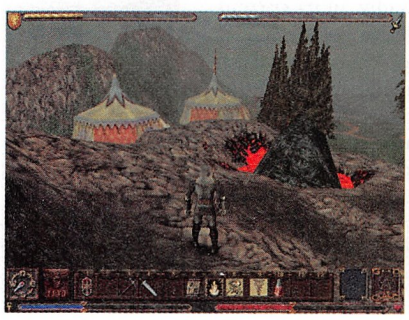
on the environment and other factors. Almost every item within the various locales (particularly those that are indoors) can be shifted, eaten, wielded, stolen, played, examined or destroyed.

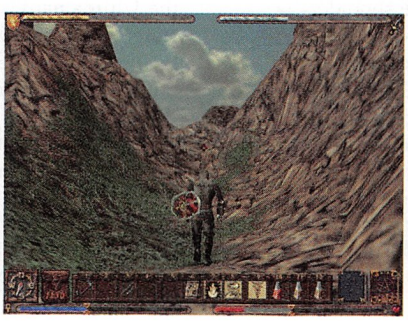
Ascension's plot centres around the Guardian's subjugation (using eight gigantic columns) of the eight major cities within Britannia, and the resultant corruption of their corresponding virtues. While the plot is thoroughly engrossing, it's best left to the player to discover. As it is, the game takes in excess of 60 hours to complete!

The quality of voice acting for the hundreds of NPCs in the game fluctuates considerably. Most performances are above par, but some are truly cringe-worthy, particularly from pirates with north-eastern US accents. But occasionally the player will witness gold medal performances that make enduring some of the less spectacular ones all worthwhile.

### Count the frames

Until four or five years ago, Origin enjoyed significant notoriety as a developer of titles that couldn't be played until two years after their release, due wholly to their ridiculously high system requirements. It took a while, but Origin eventually cleaned up their act, producing quality titles that were more than playable on mid range PCs. Sadly, in this regard, Ultima Ascension represents an unfortunate and unwelcome return to the "bad old days" of PC gaming. The game's minimum requirements are such an outlandish fabrication that many hardcore gamers would laugh out loud, were they not sobbing at the terrible framerates achieved by their top-of-the-range machines. With detail levels and the clipping plane set at the lower end of the scale, Ascension crawls on a PIII 500. Perhaps foolishly, the game has been optimised for Glide, almost totally excluding owners of D3D based cards. A recent patch has been released which is supposed to significantly improve D3D performance, but said improvement is negligible.







Skeletons prove a remarkably resilient foe for the Avatar.










On a Ninja PC, Ascension looks mighty fine - otherwise, it's very average...



When not baking bread, the Avatar tries his hand at chicken farming.

Worse still are the bugs that plague Ascension from the outset, many of which result in lock-ups and instant crashes to the desktop. The crashes, lockups and gameplay anomalies seem to increase as the game progresses. This obviously corresponds to the effort required of the Quality Assurance testers to reach advanced areas of the game, but these problems almost pale in comparison to the regularity with which saved games become inexplicably and irreversibly corrupted, thus rendering them useless. When this happens early on in the game, many may resolutely restart and forge onward, but their increased incidence over time is clearly unacceptable. Being forced to restart from a point saved five days ago will undoubtedly have most players reaching for the uninstall option.

This, coupled with its appalling performance on even the most powerful of PCs, confers upon Ascension the very real possibility that it may become one of the most returned titles in existence. For both Origin and EA, the storm clouds are already gathering, as news spreads of several major retailers in the US pulling copies of the game from their shelves as a result of the extraordinary number of refund requests.

## Five year rush job

Why this tragedy of gaming has happened is unknown. Many place the blame solely on the shoulders of Origin, though recent rumours abound of EA threatening cancellation of the project if it didn't meet their Thanksgiving 1999 deadline. At the very least, this explanation sounds quite plausible and much of the derision aimed at Origin has been redirected toward EA. Regardless of which party is at fault, the current state of Ultima Ascension is truly abysmal.

Imparting upon Ascension a fair and accurate score has been most difficult. Doubtless other reviewers the world over have suffered similar attacks of conscience, for underneath all the atrocious bugs and the horrendous performance lies a fantastic, extraordinary game just waiting to emerge from its chrysalis. With extensive patching and an exponential increase in QA testing, Ultima Ascension has the very real potential to become truly worthy of the Ultima name. Sadly, in its current state, it is impossible to recommend to all but those who absolutely must buy the game immediately.

*Brett Robinson*



Nice spot for a seafood restaurant.

**PCPP**

**FOR:** A rich and involving plot, lavish visuals and an unprecedented level of environmental interactivity.

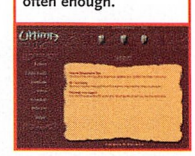
**AGAINST:** Shocking performance on the fastest of PCs due to inadequate D3D support and optimisation, infuriating bugs and an unreliable save game system.

**70**

**PLUS**

*http://www.ultima-ascension.com/support.html*

**Those who purchase the game now should get used to this page. You'll be visiting it often enough.**



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# THE RACES ARE ALIGNING.
# THE ARMIES ARE GATHERING.
# THE APOCALYPSE IS APPROACHING.

## AND PEACE IS CURLED UP IN THE FETAL POSITION, WHIMPERING.





"IT LOOKS LIKE TURN-BASED STRATEGY GAMING IS ABOUT TO GET A SHOT IN THE ARM...IT WILL HELP SOLIDIFY AND STRENGTHEN THE GENRE." - IGNPC.COM

"INCREDIBLY DETAILED GRAPHICS MAKE THIS THE MOST LIKELY CONTENDER TO THE FANTASY TURN-BASED CROWN." - PC ACCELERATOR

**The wise ones have seen an omen of doom in the form of a star in the night sky. The age of peace has officially been bludgeoned to death. The elfin court lies in ruin, and two factions have emerged. Battle flags have been raised, and silence has enveloped the land. This is the calm before the storm. You cannot choose to avoid the apocalyptic battle that looms on the horizon. Hatred and the need for revenge have a very long shelf life.**

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Yet to be classified

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JACK OF ALL GAMES

# Unreal Tournament

●**Genre:** Sexy, Multiple-Partner Multiplay ●**Players:** 1-64 (LAN, Internet, Modem) ●**Developer:** Epic ●**Publisher:** GT Interactive ●**Distributor:** GT Interactive ●**Price:** $89.95 ●**Rating:** MA15+ ●**Available:** Now
●**Need:** P200, 32MB RAM, 4xCD, 120MB HDD ●**Want:** PIII 500, 128MB RAM, 3D video card (D3D/Glide/OpenGL) ●**URL:** www.unrealtournament.com

Here it is again, the game that is so good we just had to review it twice!

BEST bots EVER!

PC POWERPLAY GOLD AWARD UNREAL TOURNAMENT 94%

"In 2291, in an attempt to control violence among deep space minters, the New Earth government legalised no holds barred fighting. The Liandri Mining Corporation working with the NEG, established a series of leagues and bloody public exhibitions..." and so the Tournament was born. Aborting the traditional single player and moving towards an uncertain future in a multiplayer world, Epic's much-anticipated Unreal Tournament is finally upon our shores.



Where are the bullet shells from?

## Rockin' combat

If you've never bothered to play multiplayer within a first-person action shooter environment for any reason, there's never been a better reason to start. Unreal Tournament expels quality at all angles. With a simplistic combat nature and a powerful (though user friendly) interface it is set up so that gamers both new and old can jump in straight away and say "Hell this rocks!"

The Unreal engine was a masterpiece and it still looks extremely beautiful - though it doesn't take the Unreal graphics engine to extreme heights, the environments and in-game architecture are as beautiful as ever. The flaws of original Unreal multiplay have thankfully been addressed, and online play is now a formidable option.

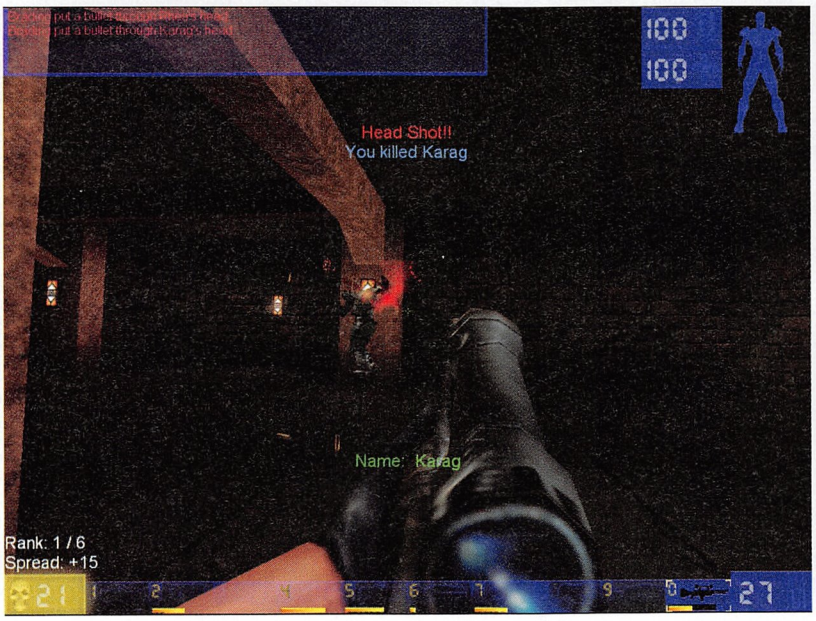
## No friends, no fun

The single player "Tournament" aspect of UT is relatively lacklustre and thus isn't worth writing back to Earth about: comprising of a series of ladders, you progress to the higher and harder maps by beating your opponent(s) to the "fragcount" (a certain number of kills). Upon completion of the level set, UT's other game modes are open for competition, with trophies awarded for each successful mode conclusion. Though thoughtful, we could have hoped for a bit more to link the levels together.

**"...UT has set an awesomely high standard..."**

Instead, multiplayer is what this game's about, and be it against bots (computer controlled opponents) or mouse-wielding humans, Unreal Tournament excels in all regards.

Epic certainly know their AI. With lead programmer Steven Polge - who pioneered the development of computer controlled deathmatch opponents when he created and coded the Reaperbot for Quake - shaping the Tournament opponents, UT was sure to be an AI masterpiece. And it is. The bots follow your orders and talk smack, always informing you of their status and location. The only noticeable problem is that they sometimes get stuck in certain doorways and travel in what seems like



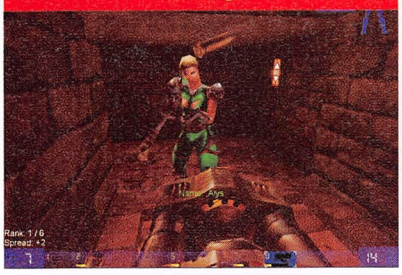





## TIPS

• While they may be the best bots ever created, they're still not as believably advanced as a trained human mind. To win the Tournament is no mean feat, but to succeed on a high difficulty setting is impossible without total level knowledge. Understanding the "flow" of the map, what connects to what and most importantly, the sounds of nearby footsteps and items being picked and how to react to them, are imperative and will ensure your success.
• Learning the sounds that each items make when obtained, and the order and configuration in which they're often picked up (which, when by bots, is almost always the same) is the quickest and easiest way to locate your opponents.

There ar e those bullets again.



Too close for comfort...



single-file. Other than that they have no trouble negotiating the corridors and controlling valid items/objectives throughout the majority of UT's brilliant map collection.

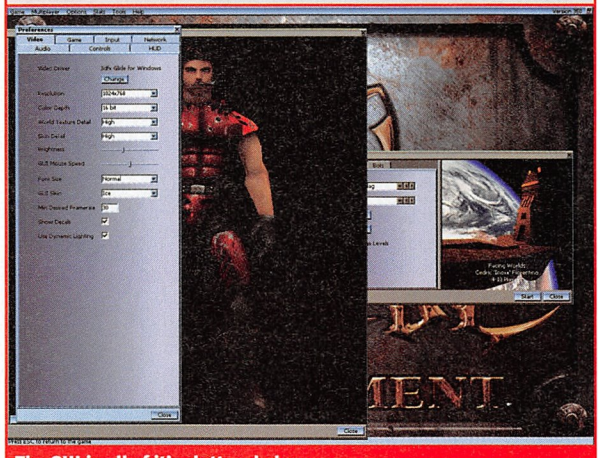
## Variety and balance

As far as variety in looks, game style, level layout and replayability is concerned, UT has set an awesomely high standard that few future multiplayer games will match. With over sixty maps to choose from, there's no reason to play a lacklustre level. Unreal Tournament caters for almost every action fan - the Team Fortress followers in Assault mode, the Starsiege Clan Players in Domination and the average deathmatch Joe-Blow - not only through its quantity of worlds, but also through their versatility in style and gameplay mechanics.

Balance is the key to success in competitive gaming - especially with weaponry. UT takes many of the weapons from the original Unreal and adds the required robust power while maintaining a desired equilibrium. The so called "super-weapon," the Redeemer - although powerful, still fits into the game perfectly, primarily due to its non-rapid rate of fire and the fact that it takes up half of your view! The flak cannon and pulse gun are the weapons of choice up to medium ranges and the sniper rifle with its

## GUI GOODNESS

**Continuing its goal as an easy-to-get-into action title, the Tournament interface in nothing short of brilliant.** It features almost every option you could possibly imagine, with console-commands made accessible through drop down menus and check boxes. Changing your skin, team, modem speed, controls and weapon preferences couldn't be easier! New players to the genre will swim in the splendour of options that were previously only available to advanced users.



The GUI in all of it's cluttered glory.




Enter the Vortex...

## TOURNAMENT TEAMPLAY

**The bots in UT are a carefully crafted creation and will respond to any reasonable orders you dish out.** Although they lack a strategic placement option (which could have easily been implemented by shooting some sort of marker on the ground then ordering bots to move to that position), they will respond to orders such as attack, defend, hold position, freelance (act according to standard engagement procedures) and protect.

In teamplay games (especially Assault, Domination and CTF), it is most important that you utilise your leadership qualities by ordering the bots under your command to follow specific tasks. Different tactics work for different maps, though it is usually best to send in the bots first to soak up the cover fire and provide the initial amount of damage, while you enter to mop up afterwards. The proper use of authority is the key to single player success and computer control.

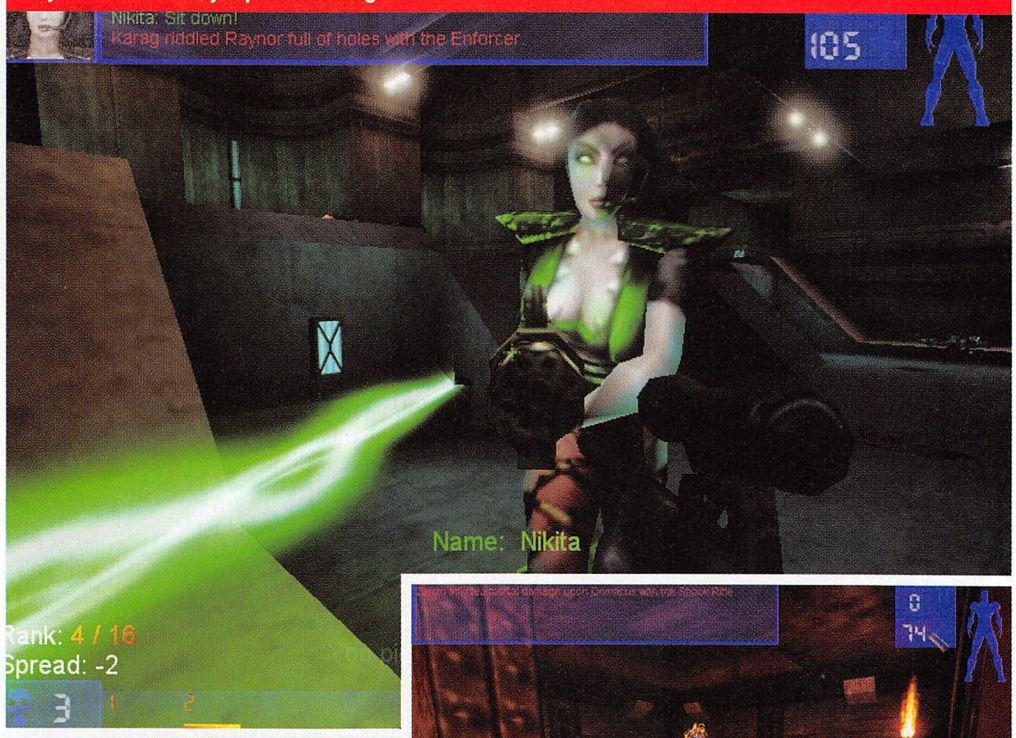


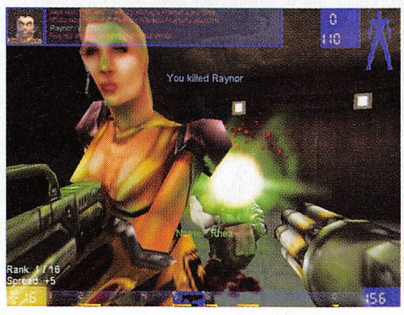
CTF - a fantastic spin on basic deathmatch play.




Nothing that a few million volts can't fix.

"Hey! Be careful where you point that thing!"







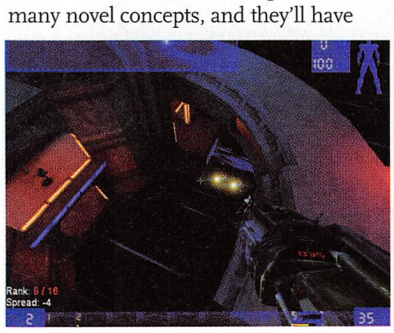
zoom-scope is the only candidate for long distance shots. The best thing about the weapons is that, although they're so different, they all work well against each other and compliment the maps beautifully.

### Twisted Levels

The most distinguishing feature of Unreal Tournament is undoubtedly its level design. For variety in layout, balance and architecture, the Tournament shines. Sporting the most comprehensive map collection in any FPS, chances are there's a level that suits your style of play perfectly.

The world variety in UT is astounding: one minute you'll be travelling throughout space at hyper-speed in DM-Hyperblast, the next you'll be deep within the belly of a pirate ship in DM-Galleon. From small, simplistic maps connected by tunnels of dense fog in DM-Fetid, to the large, expansive arches of DM-Gothic, you'll be teleported through an extensive range of unusual environments. Perhaps the most impressive deathmatch map is DM-Peak - perched high above a mountain top, a series of quickly-constructed corridors interconnect the various levels: it can be likened to the Lost Boys home in the movie "Hook" and is nothing short of a masterpiece.

The Assault arenas are a platform for many novel concepts, and they'll have you chasing trains, capturing cargo ships and storming a beachhead. CTF-wise, Unreal Tournament comes through once again - CTF-Face is perhaps the coolest ever crafted, with two large bases floating free in space, divided by the crest of a hill, creating the crux of the world.




### Attack of the mutants

Not only has Unreal Tournament been set up as a newbie-gamers heaven, inexperienced mod authors can also get in on the act through UT's mutator option. UT is perhaps the simplest game to modify yet: levels, skins and general code can all be modified with relative ease. What this means is that not only are you going to see some great stuff come out of the Unreal Tournament community, but that you're going to see it in the shortest time possible - it's a game that will have years of replay value.

Unreal Tournament is a certain addition to any action gamer's arsena - don't snub it based on Epic's previous multiplayer components, UT is a game not to be missed.

*Elih Brading*

**PLUS**

***http://www.planetunreal.com/***
**The largest and most popular archive of everything and anything Unreal-orientated. You'll find maps, mutators, tutorials, sounds, configs, skins, and models. If it's not here yet, it will be when the Liandri Corporation purchases it for tournament purposes.**

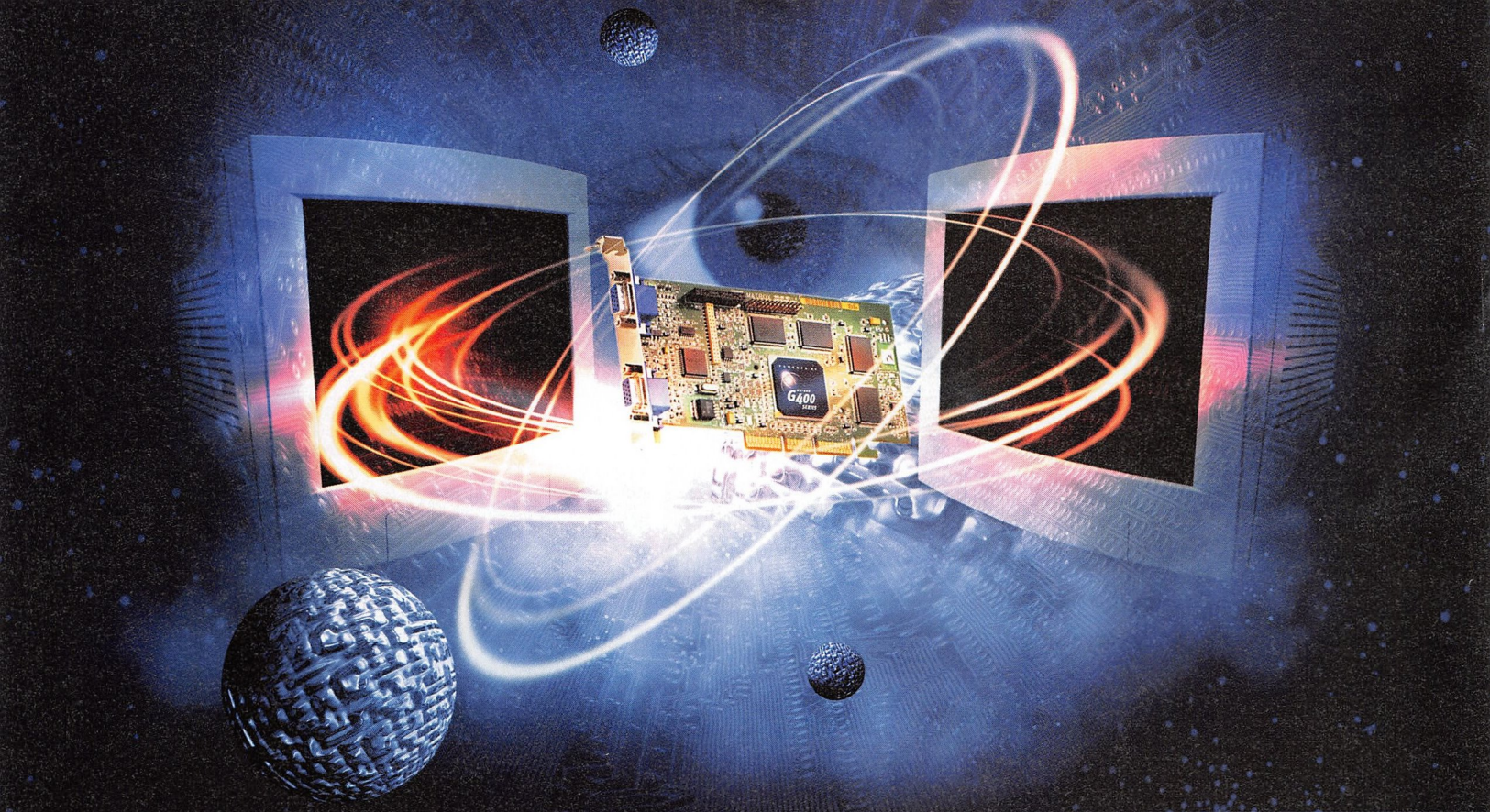


PCPP

**FOR:** Great teamplay atmosphere, fantastic maps and cool weaponry.

**AGAINST:** Trophy tournament is pathetic, only four player models.

**94**



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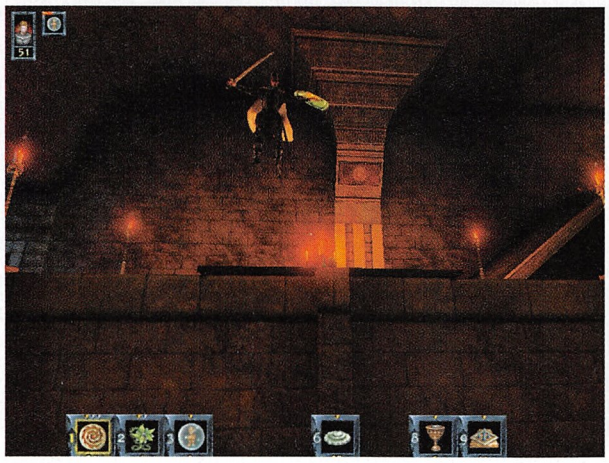
# The Wheel of Time

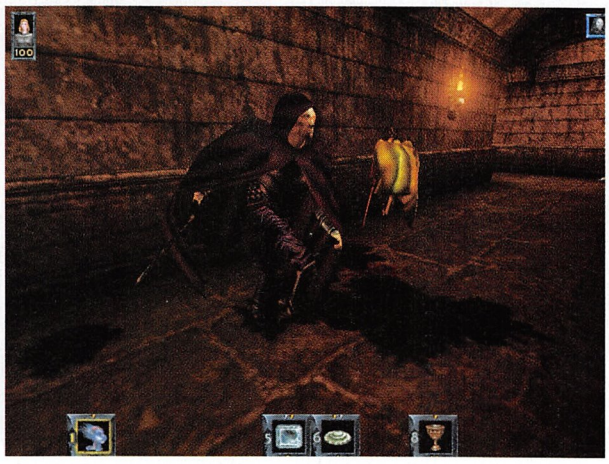
●**Genre:** Fantasy 1st person shooter ●**Players:** 1-12 ●**Developer:** Legend Entertainment ●**Publisher:** GT Interactive ●**Distributor:** GT Interactive ●**Price:** TBA ●**Rating:** MA15+ ●**Available:** Now
●**Need:** P200, 32MB RAM, 100MB HD ●**Want:** PII-300, 128MB RAM, 3D Video Card (Glide), 500MB HD ●**URL:** http://www.wheeloftime.com/

Legend Entertainment do justice to one of the world's most popular fantasy series ever.

## TIPS

- There is a limit to the number of charges you can have of each type of ter'angreal, so do things like heal yourself before collecting a new heal ter'angreal.
- Set each ter'angreal slot to the item you would use in an emergency so you can change to it quickly. Otherwise it is a two-step process.
- Use the Decay ter'angreal against strong opponents, and evade them while their health drains away.
- Be extremely careful fighting Black Ajah, as they will taint or deplete your ter'angreal supplies. Keep them on the defensive.
- Look for places that cause damage and use the whirlwind ter'angreal to move your toughest opponents into these death traps.
- Use Levitate to glide, so you can make jumps that you otherwise couldn't.





The Wheel of Time books by Robert Jordan are one of the most popular fantasy series ever published, rivaling the famous Lord of the Rings trilogy. It would seem that developers Legend have managed to avoid going down the ugly road that other companies do when they try to base a game on a known name. The Wheel of Time is far from being a shabby effort.

### Eh, Sedai?

Rather than try and stick directly to the plot from the books, Legend have made a game based on the world Robert Jordan created, and they've done a very good job. You play the part of Elayne Sedai, an Aes Sedai (female magic user) who can't channel (cast spells) properly. You are however an expert with ter'angreal (magic items). The game starts with an assassin coming into your chambers in search of a seal, which you don't have. After the commotion dies down, you are sent off after the assassin who has taken a very important ter'angreal from your chambers. The story goes on from there...

If you're thinking "Hey, that looks like a 1st person shooter" then you're right, it is. In fact, the way Legend have managed to apply this genre of game to a Wheel of Time scenario is ingenious. Because you cannot channel, that means you require ter'angreal to attack things, and because these items have charges, you essentially have an "ammo count". Rather than just leave this as a cop out excuse, it is actually a significant part of the plot, and won't bother fans of the series once they discover new pieces of information further into the game.

### Looks quite unreal

The Wheel of Time uses a variation of the Unreal engine, and as such looks stunning, but requires a truckload of RAM to avoid shocking frame rates when using the higher texture detail levels. The environments are spectacular, and the Unreal engine is

## MINDLESS VIOLENCE

**Pretty much all 1st person shooters are all about simply blowing your enemy away with various weapons.** Sure, there are strategies as to which weapon works best in certain situations, but it's still almost always a case of dealing direct damage.

Besides the obvious tactical element in multiplayer citadel mode, the ter'angreal also offer some clever indirect ways of dealing with enemies. For example, the whirlwind ter'angreal can be used to pick up enemies and put them into a situation that either kills them, or makes them harmless to you.



The "gas of death" spell.



The character models are fantastic.



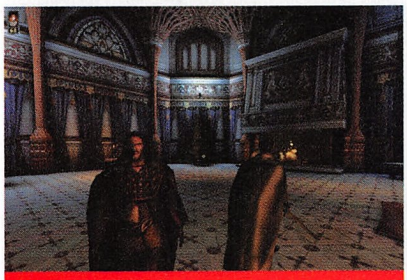
## AUTHENTIC AS...

**A primary concern of any fan of the Wheel of Time books will be how authentic everything is.** Good news... It's all very faithful to the books. Warders wear colour shifting cloaks that allow them to blend into the scenery; Trollocs come with various animal heads, just as in the books; the black wind "Machin Shin" travels through the ways to sap your strength. Even the right phrases are in there, like "Blood and Ashes!"

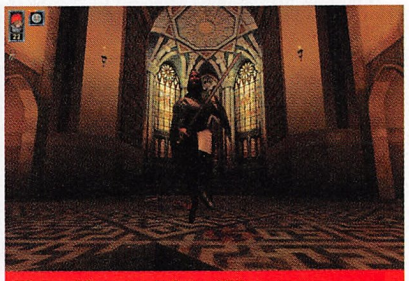
All the locations within the game match the descriptions from the book, although the single player game is set before the books. The Blight does have a "sickly" look to it, and Shadar Logoth is utterly creepy with structures crumbling away in this long dead city. It's like getting a glimpse at the world all the fans have been reading about for years.



He's obviously having a bad face day.



Multiplayer WOT is the way to go.



The architecture is incredible...



## "...more fun than hacking your arms and legs off..."

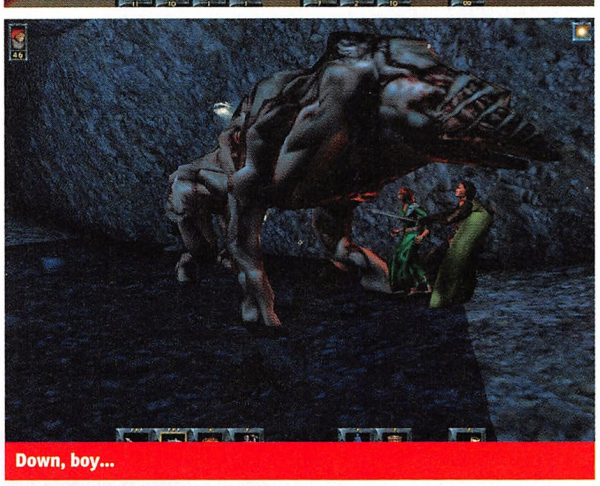
fantastic at bringing those huge cathedrals and castles to life. The lighting is good, although the way shadows are cast over the faces of the creature models is a little too dramatic, and results in some odd contrast effects.

Crisp sound effects and speech samples are nice, but the music seems a tad out of place. There are times where you're experiencing "Celtic rock", when it simply doesn't fit the mood of the situation.

### Dodgy AI

Wildly inconsistent is the only way to describe the artificial intelligence for the Wheel of Time. On one hand, you have some totally ruthless opponents such as Black Ajah (Aes Sedai that have turned traitor) who cast counter spells to your attacks, and send their own spells at you that truly mess you up. If that wasn't enough, they're extremely nimble, and require you to be a crack shot, as well as a wizard with your weapon selection. On the other hand we have some enemies stopping and getting confused, no longer fighting back. This doesn't happen often, but when you're accustomed to fighting for your life, having a trolloc decide to rub up against a pillar is suddenly more fun than hacking your arms and legs off immediately stands out as a nasty bug.

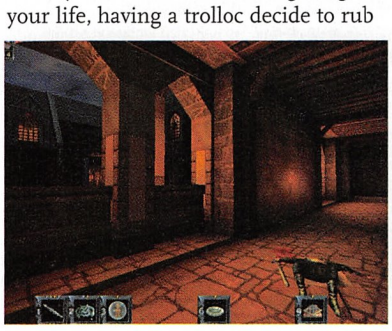
It becomes fairly easy to forgive the AI issues though, as the game is brutally hard at times. Rather than being upset by an enemy who isn't defending themselves, you'll be thanking the Creator for the rare easy kill. The combination of relentless enemies who chase you down at great speeds, plus the need to conserve your ter'angreal make the game difficult to the point where you will need to save every time you do something efficiently. Novice gamers who are looking at this game due to their interest in the books should definitely play on the easy setting. Even masters of this genre will find the default difficulty extremely challenging at times.



Down, boy...

### Citadel Battle

The multiplayer aspect of the game allows for two styles of game. Arena Battle is like any other regular deathmatch. You simply use ter'angreal to get as many kills as possible. The other mode is much more interesting, that being Citadel Battle. The object of this mode is collect seals (essentially flags) and return them to your own base. You can set up traps and guards to ensure that the enemy can't just waltz in and grab your loot. You are not limited to playing as an Aes Sedai, thanks to player models for the Forsaken, Children of the Light, and the Hound, all of whom are your rivals in the single player game.



### Not just for the fans

Fans of the books may have been after an RPG rather than an action game, but this one is faithful enough to the series to ensure that the game is not an insult to those that have followed the story for years. The multiplayer action isn't as free flowing as deathmatch heads will like, but it's definitely something different, and those craving variety will lap it up. A solid title with only a few minor issues that are easy to forgive in the grand scheme of things.

***Dan Toose***

**PLUS**

Sure, the game is pretty good, but it wouldn't have happened without an excellent set of books for it to be based upon. Check out the web site at *http://www.tor.com/sites/wheel_of_time/* to find out more about the story behind the game.




PCPP

**FOR:** True to Robert Jordan's books. Wonderful visuals. Decent challenge.

**AGAINST:** Some blatant AI bugs. A bit too hard for those new to 1st person shooters.

**84**

# Half-Life: Opposing Force

●**Genre:** FPS add-on ●**Players:** 1-64 ●**Developer:** Gearbox ●**Publisher:** Sierra ●**Distributor:** Dataflow ●**Price:** $49.95 ●**Rating:** MA15+ ●**Available:** Now
●**Need:** Half-Life, P133, 24MB RAM, 2xCD, 200MB HDD ●**Want:** PII 266, 128MB RAM, 3D video card (D3D, Glide, OpenGL) ●**URL:** www.sierrastudios.com/games/opposingforce/

Prepare for some weird doppelganger experiences with this mission pack to Valve's classic shooter.

BEST mission pack EVER!

PC POWERPLAY GOLD AWARD HALF-LIFE: OPPOSING FORCE 90%

It's not often that you find an action game in which your most anticipated goal is to exterminate yourself, but in Gearbox Software's Half-Life: Opposing Force that's exactly what your main aim is.

In Opposing Force, you return to the Black Mesa research facility through a different set of eyes: you are Corporal Adrian Shepherd, military clone and lowly-leader. With limited military knowledge and experience in the field, you are sent on a suicide mission for which it seems there's no explanation. Plunged into the middle of a combat zone, you and your teammates have a job to do: exterminate all knowledge of the Anomalous Materials project and, hopefully, be the first to terminate Gordon Freeman, the so-called mad scientist who is continually popping your friends like there's no tomorrow.

## New dudes

Building upon the fantastic storyline pioneered by Valve, Gearbox has seen fit to include two main groups of enemies: the secret service who have been called in as the God from above - the team that covers all tracks; and Race X, a group of alien fighters who are attracted to the Facility after the resonance cascade in the Anomalous Materials Laboratory. The new additions are truly terrifying, and are even more intelligent and diverse than the original opponents.



When will scientists learn: genetic experiments.

**"...from shotguns to high-powered machineguns that can trim trees..."**

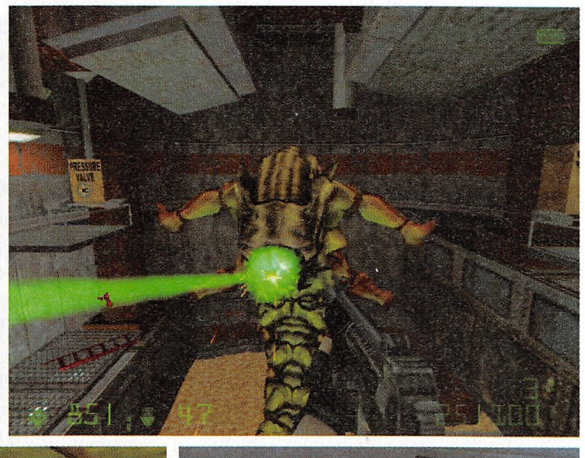
The artificial intelligence and new scripted sequences are superb. Scientists may or may not wish to lend a hand; some cower in the corner, while others are giddy with excitement. The new security officers are hilariously stereotypical - they love beer and donuts, as well as the thrill and excitement their newly modified job provides.

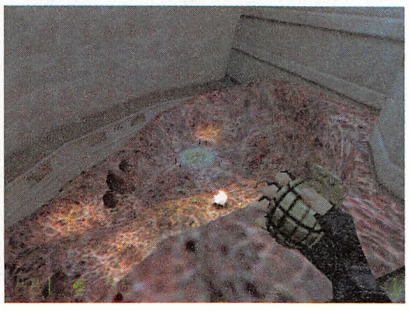
Being a marine, you now have some commando buddies that will help you on your travels: the solider (who carries a range of weaponry from

## TIPS

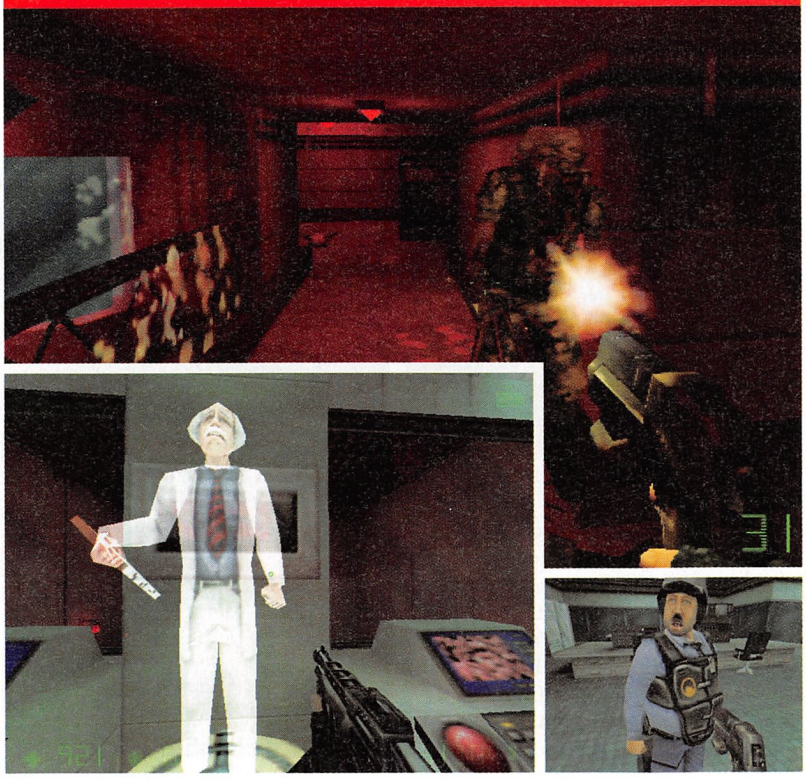
Following on from Half-Life's HEV tutorial, Opposing Force sports a "bootcamp," whose drill sergeant will instruct you on the forces and hazards of the field, as well as the function of the new military-supplied weaponry. It's a Major Payne-type setup, where your sergeant follows you around the simulated combat environment, explaining how and when to use certain tactics. New players should take the training course before entering the game (even experienced Half-Life players would be advised to "learn the ropes") or they'll be scrubbing toilet mould in the core.







The janitor was understandably miffed at the mess left after the Xmas party.







shotguns to high-powered machineguns that can trim trees), the medic and the engineer - all of which will help you travel throughout the facility unscathed.

## Old places

In Opposing Force, the characters from the original game play a prominent role. The G-Man returns and, as always, is in a calm and collective mood (even if you shoot him in the head with your sniper rifle), and you'll even get numerous opportunities to see yourself from the original game. Some of the locations will also be instantly recognisable. The bridge where you first encountered an enemy chopper and the train from the original introduction were two such moments that helped bring back the suspense generated from the first title.

Living up to the name that Half-Life built was sure to be an almost impossible task, but Gearbox have come through with the goods - Opposing Force is simply outstanding. Perhaps even more engrossing than the original game, the mission pack reveals just that little bit more about the behind the scenes of the facility, whilst still leaving questions unanswered. The Half-Life name is continued in fine style.

***Elih Brading***

## COMMANDO COMRADES

**Solider:** the solider is a personal bodyguard at your disposal. A simple, charge-in-and-shoot type grunt, he is armed with numerous weapons such as the shotgun, SAW or machinegun. Not particularly neccesary, though he's useful for drawing fire while you attack the opposition.

**Medic:** the Medic can regenerate your health, so he's a useful tag-along. Be sure to keep him at the back of the opposing forces, as he is relatively useless as an offensive drone.

**Engineer:** the Engineer is the coolest character ever. With a lit cigarette positioned on the tip of his bottom lit, he'll light his oxy-acetylene torch and cut his way through impenetrable doors - kicking them down, charging through and clearing the area for you. He's one keen-marine!



Black Mesa appears to only employ gigantism sufferers.



Damn short aliens! Stand where I can shoot you!

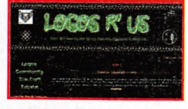




## PLUS

*www.planethalflife.com /logos/*

Halflife added the unique ability to spray paint surfaces with a custom logo. Although about twelve were originally included, there's a stack of user created ones downloadable from the above site: from sports logos to graffiti tags to ill-images of Monica Lewinsky.




PCPP

**FOR:** As atmospheric as the original, new enemies are engrossing and the weapons are functional as well as funky.

**AGAINST:** Low-poly player hands look funny, character commentary. Steep price for an add-on.

**90**

# Indiana Jones & The Infernal

●**Genre:** 3D Archaeology ●**Players:** 1 ●**Developer:** Lucasarts ●**Publisher:** Lucasarts ●**Distributor:** Metro ●**Price:** $79.95 ●**Rating:** G8 ●**Available:** Now
●**Need:** P200, 32MB RAM, 3D video card (D3D) ●**Want:** PII 350, 64MB RAM, joypad. ●**URL:** www.lucasarts.com

Infernal? Well, yes, in a manner of speaking.

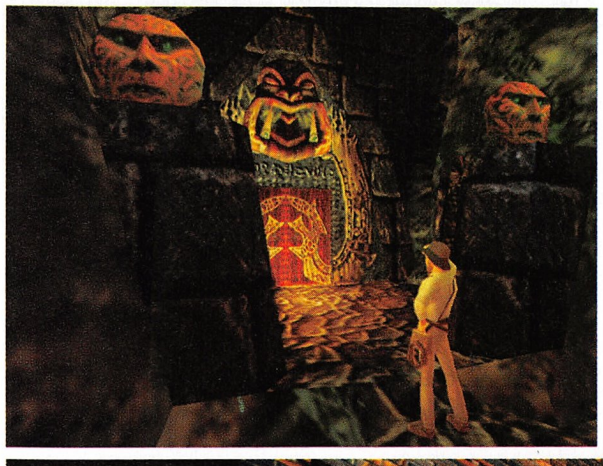
**TIPS**

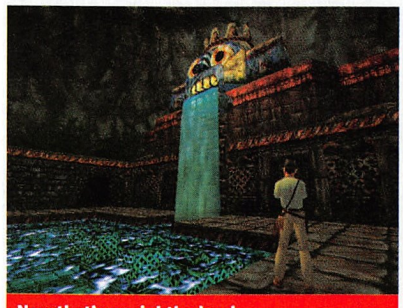
• A good way to fall to your death or get sniped or just plain get stuck is to not look around. The whip adds a whole new element to the game layout, and that means having to look carefully for the various outcroppings, ledges, posts (or whatever looks "whippable") that you can use. Also, just be careful of enemies that lurk way out of reach.

What's happened to LucasArts? Their recent offerings have been decidedly disappointing: the shallow Phantom Menace, the solid but lacklustre Racer and the upcoming kiddies game Pitdroids. All of them have been saying that LucasArts have been content to simply rest on their laurels and pick up royalties from recognisable film icons. Thankfully, with Indiana Jones & the Infernal Machine there has been something of a change of heart over at the LucasArts office; it's still a film tie-in, but at least someone has been having a bit of think about how standard third-person action can be made more interesting. It still doesn't make for a success, though.

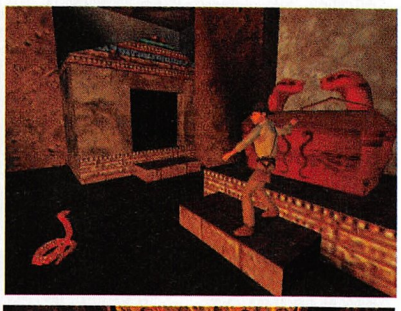
## Towers of blocks

Basically, it's pretty much what you'd expect from the king of archaeologists taking on the only serious challenger to that role, Ms Lara Croft. Pretty standard 3D action stuff: shooting, rolling, block pushing, heinous traps and puzzles, puzzles, puzzles. The plot? Indy runs around and tries to find an ancient artifact to save the earth. Indeed, the Tower of Babel has been found *(You'd think something that big would pretty hard to lose - Ed)* and - surprise - this monument to man's arrogance houses an ancient power. Could it be the Infernal Machine itself? Set slightly after WWII, this time it's all Cold War action with the Russians as the bad guys and Indy as the man recruited by none other than the CIA. From Arizona to ancient tombs of Nubian kings, Indy will have to journey the earth to gather up all the parts of this Infernal Machine before something very naughty happens. It's all quite interesting if you like the story-telling aspect.





Now that's unsightly drool.





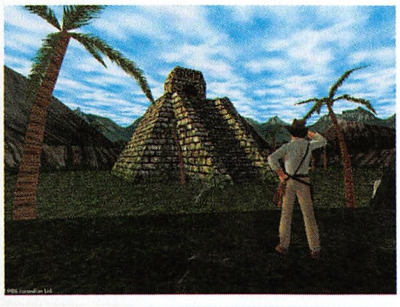
## Climb and clamber

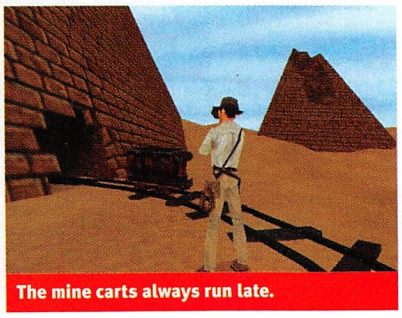
Now, let's give the honey before the vinegar. What is good about Indy is the 3D component. Some of the rendering used in the game is really quite fine. Backgrounds move swiftly and sensibly as Indiana's viewpoint changes. The texturing is really rather tasty and the draw depth is quite large. The rough-hewn rocks of Arizona actually look like rough-hewn rocks. And an aspect of game design that is rarely spoken much of really comes into its own here: colour is used to wonderful effect, the sky is a vibrant blue and earth colours really evoke atmosphere.

Clever little features include Indy disappearing if there is a close-up shot of him - handy when trapped on walkways and about to make a



"See, Mr Jones? Our Russian deodorant keeps my shirt free of nasty sweat stains!"



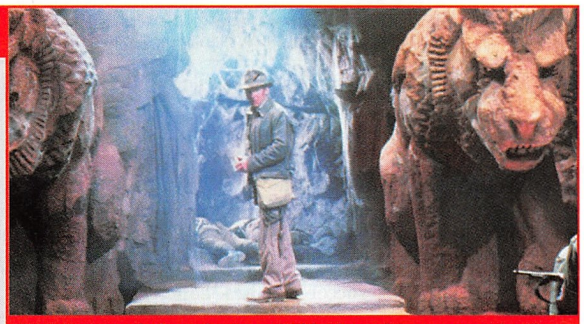


The mine carts always run late.

# Machine

## WASTED POTENTIAL

**The Indiana Jones films have translated to film in several ways, from platformer through to RPG and now 3D action.** The unique pulp feel of the movies is one of the most important elements of the series success, and has also proven to be the most elusive element to translate to game format. Where Infernal Machine also fails is that it has created a game and chucked in a license. The snappy banter of the films, as well as the engrossing real world history is pretty much completely lacking. Yes, the locations are mainly real, but the histories are ignored. The cinematic feel is lost. While there are action scenes, often they come across as mere filler levels to pad out playing time. Which is a shame, as Lara Croft has proved 3D action can be used to great movie effect.



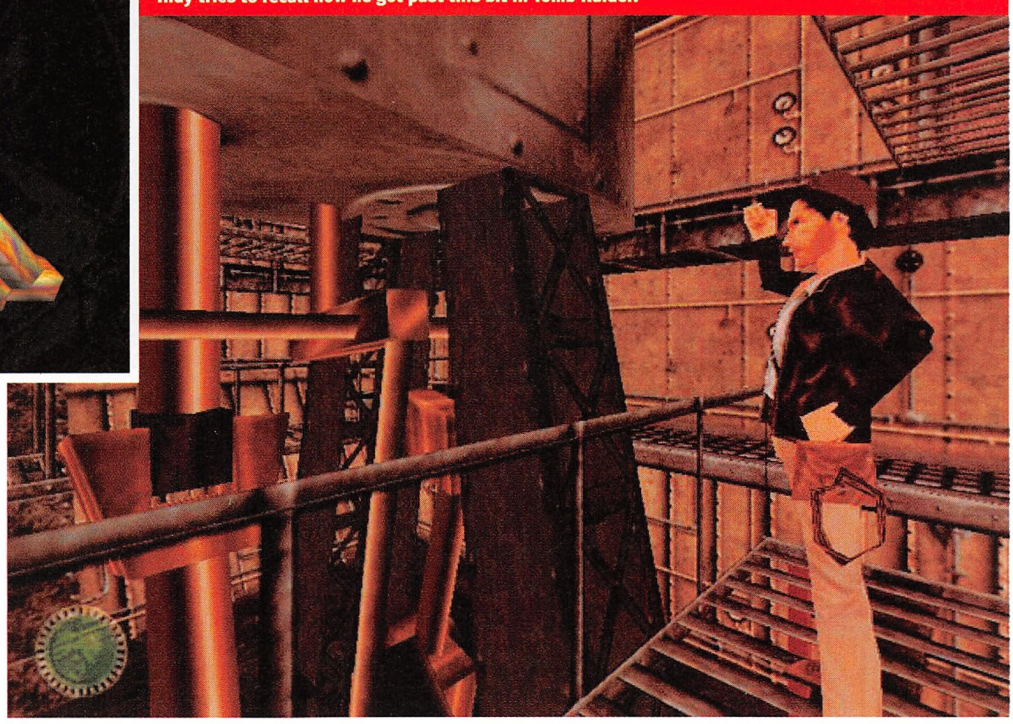
"Cut! Can you do it again, Harry? This time with more emotion."



precarious leap into the abyss. But the real winner is character animation. Indy climbs and clambers and lashes the whip and falls and crawls in a very realistic motion. It's far better in this area than the other adventure games of its sort (I'm looking at you Shadowman, Tomb Raider, Prince of Persia, et al).

Unfortunately, looks are not everything and while this game is surely pretty, it really just does not have the guts of a classic. Level design is pretty simple and very standard. You really are not going to get much of a feeling of satisfaction from getting from place to place. All the puzzles are textbook stuff and, if you play a lot of this sort of action 3D based game, then you'll be seeing the answers in minutes. And while there is clever AI for enemies, who hide behind cover and try to gang up, they nevertheless die far too easily and are stupidly slow.

Indy tries to recall how he got past this bit in Tomb Raider.



### Whip your post

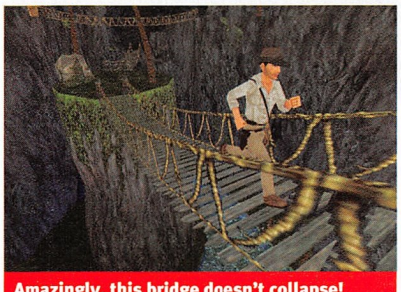
The game is also filled with too many bugs and one glaringly painful example of sloppy coding: the posts that you can use the whip to slide on often don't register on action detectors until you have walked around them aimlessly. It took me 20 minutes to get the second whippable post to work.

**"...shooting, rolling, block pushing, heinous traps..."**

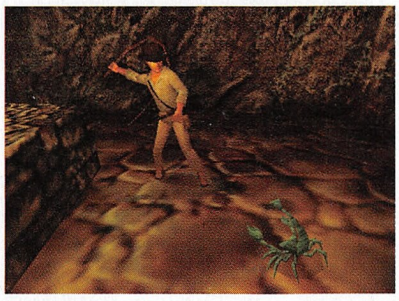
It's these kinds of things that really make or break a game that costs you nearly a sawbuck these days. While Infernal Machine is a decent game, long-term playability is not there, and it is filled with glitches and bugs that make you grit your teeth. It should be a better product. The sheer lack of innovation is what kills and this game suffers some grievous wounds. Sorry LucasArts, this game is just not ready to play with the big boys.

*Christian Read*



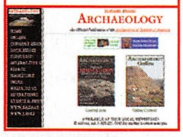


Amazingly, this bridge doesn't collapse!



**PLUS**

Just in case all this treasure hunting has made you curious check out this interesting article on the market for stolen antiquities at *http://www.nma.gov.au/icom/traffic.html* or learn more about the venerable science at *http://www.archaeology.org/*. God forbid those computer games might spark an interest in something!




PCPP

**FOR:** Rendering, texturing and use of colour are all superb.

**AGAINST:** Game interface is untidy. Ordinary gameplay and level design.

69

# FIFA 2000

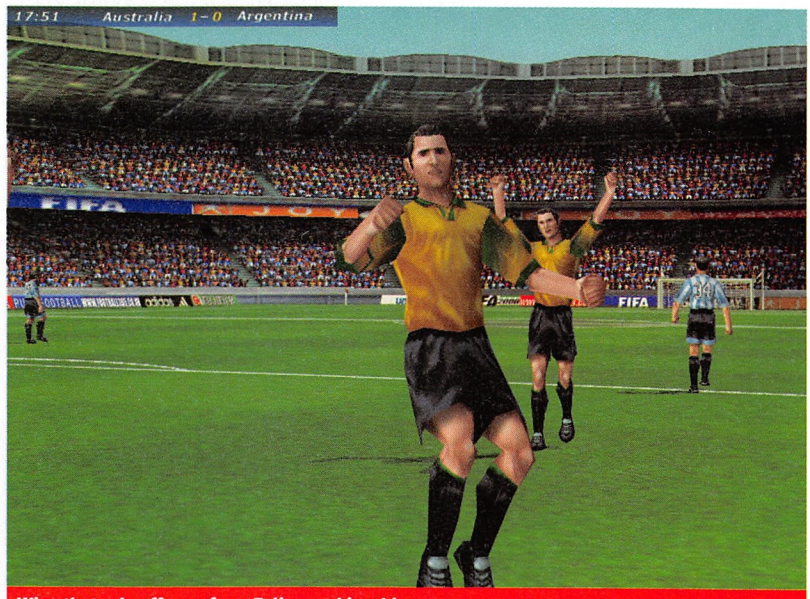
●**Genre:** Soccer Sim ●**Players:** 1-4 ●**Developer:** EA Sports ●**Publisher:** Electronic Arts ●**Distributor:** Electronic Arts ●**Price:** $69.95 ●**Rating:** G ●**Available:** Now
●**Need:** P133, 32MB RAM, 80+ HDD Space, 4xCDROM ●**Want:** PII200, 64MB RAM, 150 HDD Space, 4MB 3D Accelerator, 8xCDROM ●**URL:** www.fifa2000.com

EA Sports recapture the soccer simulation crown.

## TIPS

- Keep a close eye on the fatigue indicators within the team management sub-screen, if any of your players become too tired, their skill level drops.
- Switch IGM (in game management) according to the pace of the game. If you're leading a game by 1 goal with only 2 mintues left on the clock, it's probably best to assume a defensive posture.
- Be wary of which angle you tackle players from. Anything 180 degrees forward of the player seems to be fine, and very rarely induces a foul. However, delve into the aft 180 degrees, and watch the cards fly!
- I found that most teams are susceptible to the traditional wing-attack. Send a few lobs up the wing and you soon find yourself in possession within the opposition 1/3.

Every soccer fan with a PC follows the Electronic Arts FIFA series of games. Since their humble inception in 1996 they have continually raised the level of realism in simulated soccer matches. Eagerly we await each new release, simply busting to find out what they've done to it this time. Our year long wait is at an end for the last time this millennium. It's here! FIFA Two Thousand!



Wipe that grin off your face, Zelic, you big whinger.

## Another triumph

As was expected, FIFA 2000 is another EA Sports triumph. And thanks to the massive level of grunt produced by the average home PC of today, the experience is amazingly close to the real thing! With most of the past FIFA titles based on either the international or league sides of soccer, the EA Sports development team has enhanced the winning concept of FIFA 99 to bring us a "bigger and better" game in FIFA 2000 by combining the two. Included are fifteen of the world's most popular leagues along with 42 of the best teams of all time. Now on offer is fully integrated seasonal play, complete with league, cup and European fixtures all in one season - year after year. Additionally, custom cups and competitions can also be created and run. The front end itself is nothing terribly exciting, and the Robbie Williams music implemented doesn't feel quite as "appropriate" as the audio witnessed in previous versions, however, as is the case in many games these days, first looks can be very deceiving.

## Fluid and realistic

The visuals have undergone a minor face-lift now appearing more fluid and realistic, however the real jewel in the crown is in the form of ultra-realistic player animation captured with the help of Manchester United's Andy Cole. Players traverse the pitch with a new dynamic using what looks to be something in the range of forty thousand different frames of animation - that's how good it looks! A groovy little feature is the facial animation during cutscenes. These see players abusing each other after fouls, and celebrating with the o d shout of glory during post-goal celebrations. Controls have also now been refined, allowing a much higher level of fluidity whilst playing each game.

## Pass indicators

Most actions are performed by either tapping or simply holding down the necessary button - an extremely welcome system which counters well the complex array of special moves seen in FIFA 96-99. Also new is the pass



Midway through the 1st half a black hole appeared and sucked everything toward the goal.




The perils of being square at the back.

## THE MASTER PLAN

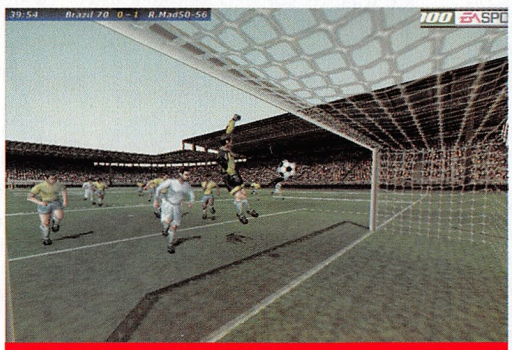
**FIFA 2000 contains the most sophisticated team management option from any of the titles.** Change anything from the positioning of each player to the way they line-up in formation. Change the team passing style to direct, as that long ball approach doesn't seem to be working, or simply alter the formation. Whatever your whim, it's there to be done, and if done with a little research (opposing team) in mind, you may find that winning advantage.




There's a hole in that defence.

Even playing in an Ajax home strip couldn't prevent Arsenal turning on the style.



The keeper scored 8.5 for that dive.




indicator that changes colours according to the likelihood of pass completion. This helps immensely when the receiver is out of view. Red indicates the pass is unlikely to succeed (the path of the ball being covered by a member of the opposite team), yellow indicates a good chance of success and a green indicator suggests a clear pass. This addition compensates somewhat for the useful, but now missing fatigue gauge. Another exciting addition is the use of set pieces. Available during dead-ball situations, these allow the user to attempt offensive runs using specific players, or to initiate double man marking in those tricky defensive situations.

### Strategic analysis

FIFA 2000 improves greatly on the AI witnessed in FIFA 99 too. Whilst the competition is basically non-existent on the amateur difficulty level (which, incidentally, makes it a perfect level of play for rookies), both professional and world-class modes offer experienced FIFA players a whole new challenge. Opposition teams now seem to analyse human controlled attacking and defensive strategies and adjust accordingly to weed out defensive gaps as well as blocking offensive progression. To win a game at either of these levels is truly a tough ask, and immensely satisfying.



### Generic stadiums

Opting not to include real-life venues, all the stadiums within FIFA 2000 are now generic in nature. This however doesn't mean they're not as good. As well as team side-benches, crowd animation is now in abundance and spectators tend to dress in colours according to the team they barrack for. The mood of ticket holders changes according to the action on the field; if the ball is near the net the crowd begins to roar in anticipation, and provide the odd team chant when the game seems to slow down.

FIFA 2000 can be played in multiplayer via dual-players on one PC, IPX on a LAN or a direct connection using a modem. Still missing however is the ability to play on the internet, and this is really no surprise as the bandwidth required is still not available to anyone with a standard dial-up account.

**"...players abusing each other after fouls..."**

### A sterling series

EA Sports have certainly set the pace with FIFA 2000, and with the advances made to the game in the space of just four years, one can only imagine what wonders lie in store for future FIFA releases.

***Edward Fox***

**PLUS**

*http://www.fifagaming.com/*
**This site offers up-to-the minute information on the entire EA FIFA series.**



PCPP

**FOR:** Most realistic player animation ever seen in a soccer game ever. AI is consistently difficult at harder levels promoting longevity

**AGAINST:** Commentators aren't spectacular and the music doesn't suit. Player bodies are slightly elongated.

**88**

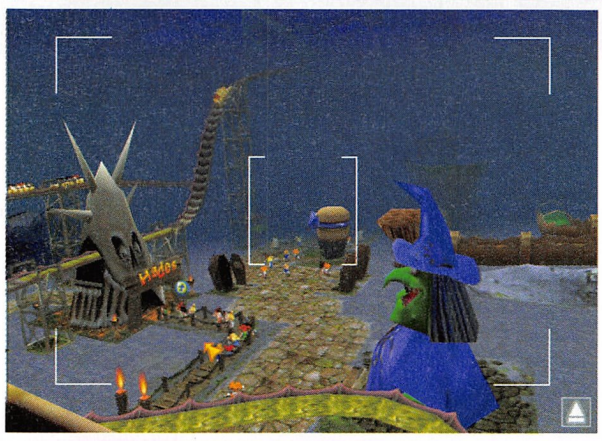
# Theme Park World

●**Genre:** Joyriding park construction ●**Players:** 1 ●**Developer:** Bullfrog ●**Publisher:** Electronic Arts ●**Distributor:** Electronic Arts ●**Price:** $89.95 ●**Rating:** G ●**Available:** Now
●**Need:** P200, 32MB RAM, 300MB HD, 4xCD ●**Want:** PII 300, 64MB RAM, 8MB 3D video card (D3D), 16xCD ●**URL:** www.themeparkworld

From dungeons to dodgems, Bullfrog's management sims seemingly know no bounds. It's Dungeon Keeper with fairy floss.




**Unfortunately, the limited field of vision isn't enough to fully appreciate your loving creation in its entirety.**



For you mini-entrepreneurs out there, the wait is over. If you've been pumping out the last remaining hours still left in RollerCoaster Tycoon (see the Added Attractions review on p78), here is your next serve in the sim genre that some of us can't get enough of.

## Put a smile on your face

Theme Park World is the descendant of the landmark Theme Park from the earlier 1990s. Combining the fun of a carnival with the micro-management that was staple training for all junior execs on the rise (*Are you sure? - Ed*), Theme Park was something of a sensation. Like Sim City with a healthy serve of good humour, Theme Park and later Theme Hospital were nice, clean fun for the whole family.

Just like in the original game, you are a park operator who must design a theme park. You'll need to build drink shops, sideshows, toilets and gift shops among others, to keep your park attendance happy in between your big ride attractions. There is the usual comfortable point-&-click interface and overall the game is extremely easy to use.

You start out being able to build in two parks (Halloween World and Lost Kingdom) while two others (Space Zone and Wonder Land) are not available. As you achieve certain goals, your reward is in the form of Golden Tickets. These goals might be a level of happiness in the park or having a certain number of visitors or many other things. These tickets are useful because every third ticket gives you a Golden Key that will open new parks (if you have enough of

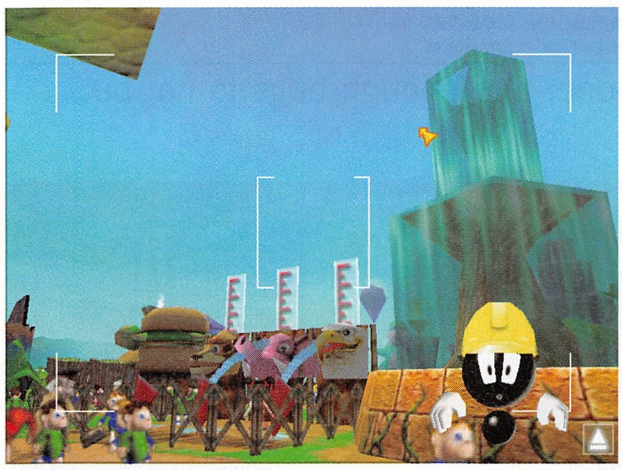
## TPW VS RCT (NO, THIS ISN'T WRESTLING)

**Of course, there is the inevitable comparison between Theme Park World and RollerCoaster Tycoon.** While TPW is the essence of simplicity, it doesn't have any statistics to give you feedback about your rollercoasters and other rides. Also, there are at most two or three varieties of coasters in each park - not a lot of options.

RCT is merciless as far as track height and placement goes, but on the flipside you have many and varied track types. You can also go underground and use a lot more special track sections. RCT is a winner for detail but TPW has it for ease of use and as a big bonus, you can ride your coasters as well!



**One for the older theme park owner.**



## "WILCOME TO THIM PAIRK WORLD! DOYN'T AYE KEN YOU?"

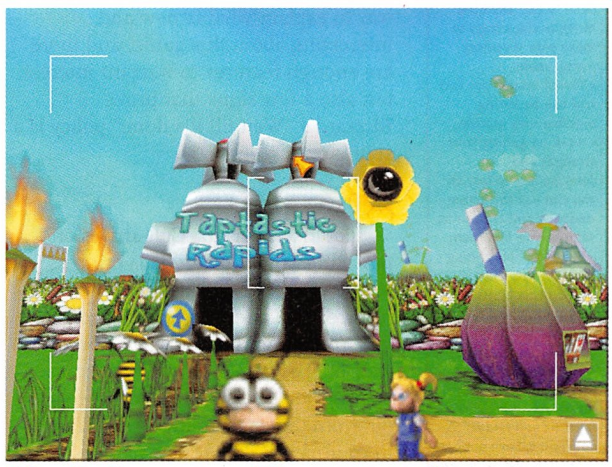


**Your guide throughout the game is a little black dot (or something) with a Scottish accent.** Imagine Ewan McGregor as the host of a children's breakfast show and you're just about there. He's conveniently dressed up to match the park that you're in: ghoulish garb for Halloween World, a space suit for Space Zone. He'll update you on your progress and give advice on what's working well and what isn't. How helpful!

The little guy is cute for the first day or two but his lines really begin to grate on your nerves after the while. And even worse - you can't turn the little blighter off!




Collect sufficient keys and you can access new park zones such as this one.




## "...take a walk around your own park in 3D..."

them!). Also, Golden Tickets allow you to build mystery rides in each of your parks.

### Wheeeee!

The biggest drawcard in Theme Park World is definitely the ability to take a walk around your own park in 3D, see how things look and even ride your rides. Yes, ride your own rollercoasters and other attractions. This is great fun and gives you a real perspective on how to improve a ride for your customers.

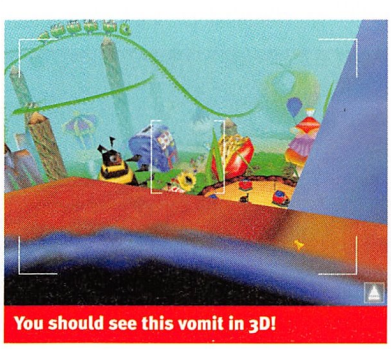
The construction of rollercoasters in Theme Park World is about as user-friendly as is possible. It involves the placement of pylons to give the outline of the track, then adjusting the height and inclination of each of the pylons to affect the track. The track adjusts to accommodate your placement of pylons, making completing a track VERY easy. You can even adjust the coaster track while it's still running!

There are some drawbacks to what is a generally well-designed and playable game. With only four parks to play and very little customisation possible, the replay value is probably a little lacking. With the spatial limitations of having to buy extra space, you are quite stuck for design options in the early stages, too. But the most annoying thing, after a while, is the damned guide! If I hear that Scottish accent once more I'm going to scream!

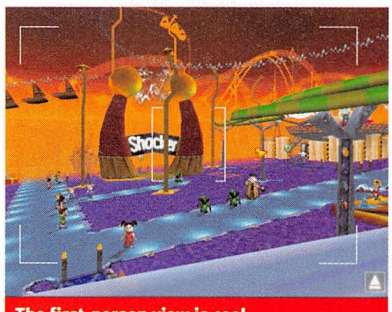
### For the kids

That said, the game is aimed very much at the younger gamer. This ISN'T a bad thing. The fact is though that it doesn't have as wide an appeal as you might expect of these games, especially since we don't see them all that often. Your younger gamer will certainly love it and get a kick out of the challenges that are there. For the older gamer (like myself say), the game probably won't last as long as you expect on the hard drive. This aside, it is a winner for carnival fun!

*John Dewhurst*



You should see this vomit in 3D!



The first-person view is cool.

**PLUS**

www.cwlewis.clara.net/ Check out the baddest theme parks in the U.K., since you can count Australian theme parks on one hand. See where Bullfrog got their inspiration!




PCPP

**FOR:** All the joys of theme parks. Ride your own rides!

**AGAINST:** Only four parks to play in. Quite easy difficulty level. That damn black dot guide!

**80**

# Revenant

●**Genre:** Action RPG ●**Players:** 1-4 ●**Developer:** Cinematix ●**Publisher:** Eidos ●**Distributor:** Ozisoft ●**Price:** TBA ●**Rating:** MA15+ ●**Available:** Now
●**Need:** P233, 32 MB RAM, 390MB HD ●**Want:** PII-300, 128 MB RAM, 390MB HD, 8MB 3D Videocard ●**URL:** http://www.eidosinteractive.com/revenant/

Enough improvements to not be a mere Diablo clone, and enough bugs to not be called a classic.

## TIPS

- Use the Quicksand spell once you get it, as it immobilises your enemy and lets you attack them freely.
- After you have purchased the best armour in town, just collect the rest on your journeys. There is no need to buy anything really, besides bags to make your inventory manageable.
- Thrust attacks are fast and can be strung together very quickly.
- Work on getting your strength and constitution up fast so you can use the better weapons and armour as soon as you find them.
- Be careful of running into combat, as you may enter a fight with no stamina, and not be able to attack for a while.
- Don't stockpile food; just use it to top up your hit points after each fight, as you find it constantly. Save potions for use in combat when you need serious boosting.

Diablo was popular to the point where it is really quite amazing that it is only now that we're seeing the first basic clones, those being Darkstone, and now Revenant. In fairness though Revenant is not just a Diablo clone, as it has completely different combat and magic systems, and utilises 3D graphics. However, comparisons to Diablo are the easiest way to explain what is new and interesting about this game, and there are enough features to warrant interest, but also a few signs that prove Blizzard's "Wait till it's done" policy is a sound one.

### Get the girl

Plot in a nutshell... Cult arrives on peaceful island. Cult kidnaps princess. King has a cry and court wizard resurrects an ancient warrior to go get girl. You guessed it, you're the ancient warrior. The game starts with your resurrection, and you have to figure it all out from there, including who you were in your past life. Your new name is Locke D'Averam, with "Locke" being the name given to all revenants (those brought back from the dead to perform a service). The adventure starts in the town of Misthaven, which serves as a base of operations for the rest of the game, in a similar fashion to the town in Diablo.

## MULTIPLAYER COP OUT

**Besides the element of cheating, multiplayer was a huge success for Diablo.** Revenant will not be remembered as a great multiplayer game, as it works more as a deathmatch game, rather than a co-operative version of the main game. It is possible to play a co-operative game with monsters, but the lack of a module to do this out of the box kills interest in the idea straight away. The multiplayer maps provided are dull as dishwater, looking like an afterthought compared to the lovely single player map world.



"Can I get some Ninja Y-fronts, please?"

Wait a minute, that's Ultima Ascension. Minus the tent, of course.








Revenant is a visual treat, with very funky 3D models for the monsters - all of which are very nicely animated. There are also nice lighting effects, which bring the game to life, and there's enough colour throughout the game to keep things interesting. However, if you don't have plenty of RAM, all this eye candy will come at a price, and the game will take frame rate as payment.

### Scaring old women

Despite Diablo's brilliance, one area it lacked in a little was character, as there was very little in the way of conversation in the game. Diablo relied upon the gripping atmosphere instead. Cinematix have done a sterling job at adding personality and humour to Revenant through clever dialogue and amusing voice acting. Things like having an oriental weapons trainer with an accent are nice, but the really impressive moments are those that aren't really necessary, like having Locke being called a thing from Hell by an old woman, and then being able to gear the conversation so he plays on her beliefs and scares her witless for a joke. The all too common problem of having the hero sound like a limp-wristed dweeb is wonderfully absent in Revenant. Locke is a narcy, arrogant, witty, trash-talkin', smart arse... He's great.

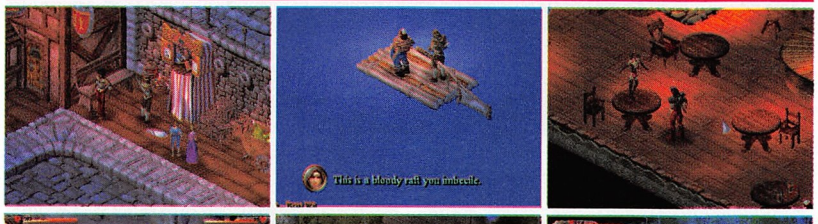
The combat engine in Revenant is also far deeper than that of Diablo. There is the option to fight simply by


"Look, I ordered mauve, not purple!"


He must have a strong rod.




Sadly, the giant marshmallow spell proved too little, too late.






The spell effects in Revenant are truly gorgeous.

## HO HO HO IT'S MAGIC...

**The magic system in Revenant is a real mixed bag, quite literally.** Spells are cast by taking certain talismans from your spell pouch and combining them to produce an effect. This allows for experimentation, but there is little need, as you come across scrolls which give combinations at various spots throughout the game. Once a spell is cast, a shortcut and spell description is added to your magic menu.

While some of the spells look very flashy, it's a couple of the boring looking ones that throw game balance out the window. Creating a quicksand pit at your opponent's feet is something you can do early in the game, and it basically allows you to kill them with ease. A little less emphasis on the power of magic would have made combat far more challenging.



**"...will not be remembered as a great multiplayer game..."**

using the mouse, but it is much better to use the keyboard or a joypad. With buttons/keys for block, thrust, swing, and chop you can bring down most enemies in the game with ease once you get the hang of blocking and then launching an offensive. On top of the basic buttons, there are combos and "interactives" (throws) to learn from the weapons trainer in Misthaven. If that wasn't enough, you can roam freely while facing your opponent, and also perform flips and rolls to evade attacks. There are even special "fatality" animations for different monsters - very cool. Combat is really only difficult when you face a boss, or when you are surrounded by a handful of enemies.



## Oddities

As enjoyable as Revenant is, there were moments where I not only stopped enjoying myself, but also believed I would no longer be able to progress in the game due to a bug that brought the frames per second to a value way below 1. Somehow I got around these bugs with much fiddling around, but it was not apparent what actually got me past them, which also was annoying. Perhaps this could be passed off as a bit of bad luck, but the Eidos online Revenant forum revealed that I was not alone, and that almost everyone who posted was encountering bugs that made the game unplayable somehow.

As far as length - the fun in Revenant is over a little too fast. Then again, the same could be said about Diablo as a single player game. There are signs that Cinematix had plans for extras, like characters that would join you and fight along side you. These NPCs simply say "I'd like to join you, but not right now." When then? In the next game? There is also an oddity with the skills system too. There are numerous different weapons skills to develop, yet virtually every weapon you come across is a sword. Either the developers didn't get around to adding these other weapons, or they've made an odd oversight.

## Enjoyable action RPG

Revenant is a really enjoyable action-RPG that unfortunately shows a few signs of being rushed to meet a deadline. The diverse range of bugs that owners are experiencing shows that playtesting obviously wasn't thorough enough. Keep an eye out for a comprehensive patch before you hand over your money. Once that patch does arrive, definitely check it out, as there are enough interesting new features here to prevent it from simply being a Diablo clone.

***Dan Toose***

**PLUS**

**Are you into RPGs to the point where you've looked into getting a blow-up female elf? You sad git. If you're likely to find out about said blow-up doll, it'll be at RPG Host, a very spiffy Role Playing Game site. Check it out now!**
***www.rpghost.com***



PCPP

**FOR:** Funky combat system. Excellent voice acting and sense of character.

**AGAINST:** Many users will face bugs. Comes across as a bit incomplete. A little too easy to master.

**82**

# Rally Championship 2000

●**Genre:** Rally Sim ●**Players:** 1-8 ●**Developer:** Magnetic Fields ●**Publisher:** Europress ●**Distributor:** QV Software ●**Price:** $89.95 ●**Rating:** G ●**Available:** Now
●**Need:** PII 266, 32MB RAM, 30 HDD Space, 2xCD ●**Want:** PII 350, 64MB RAM, 598 HDD Space, 8xCD, 3D Video Card (D3D, Glide) ●**URL:** www.rallychampionship.co.uk

It's better than sex. Apparently.

## TIPS

- In any arcade mode, when passing rival car, make sure you do it on a corner as they have a habit of slowing you down considerably if you try to pass on a straight.
- In a 2WD vehicle, try to take corners by dabing the brake and counter-steering just enough to let the rear end out a bit.
- It's important, during the longer (25mins) stages that you take good care of the vehicle, as a coolant leak or lost gear can easily add a few minutes to your overall time.
- In type 1 and 2 corners, it's generally not necesary to brake, however, in type 3,4 and 5 corners, get ready to hit those anchors.

What could be more fun than bashing around a dirt track in a brand new Subaru Impreza at 150mph? Not much! Sure, that experience described by a three-letter word (*"Jog"? - Ed*) comes close, but let's face it, if any Aussie bloke was asked to choose between an sti WRX and a quick shag (*Oh, I see - Ed*), the rex would come up trumps every time! As the male mind battles with this most important question, those good fellows at Magnetic Fields have been hard at work providing the "rex over sex" contingency amongst us the next best thing - Rally Championship 2000!

## Six by six

Based on the Mobil 1 British Rally Championship, with the emphasis on simulation as opposed to game, Rally 2000 is seriously dressed to impress. The visual and audio standards are amongst the highest ever witnessed in the genre, and the level of detail encompassing each stage is completely unsurpassed. With a total of six included rally courses with six stages in each, all have been accurately recreated and modelled in-line with their real-life counterparts providing that realistic touch lacking from past titles. In the vehicle department, there is a staggering twenty plus from which to choose. All cars are grouped into classes based on power output and number of drivable axes, and you can choose from the A5 Ford Puma and the A7 Renault Maxi Megane to the 1999 World Rally Championship winning A8 Mitsubishi Lancer EVO V.

Rally 2000 sports several modes of play including Single Race, Time-Trial, the Mobil 1 Championship, the A8 World Rally Car Championship and Arcade. All modes of play accommodate a multiplayer facet, by either split-screen two-player action or "take-turns" four player challenges. When the game is first played, the only vehicles available are the A5, 6 & 7 2WD variants; however, as a bonus reward for winning any arcade level or championship race, an A8 beast of your choice or secret car is unlocked.

Windscreen wipers are a necessity in the muddy English countryside.



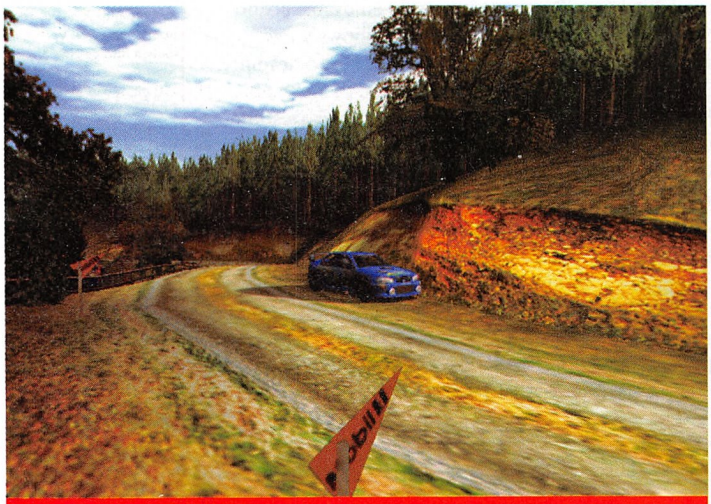






## Lush scenery

All the tracks within Rally 2000 contain spectacular visuals, all of which left me totally impressed. Most notable is the second stage of the Vauxhall Rally of Wales: set in a mountainous region of southern Welsh countryside, this stage must be seen to be believed. The track starts at the base of a mountain and by the end of the fifteen-minute monster, you've circumnavigated the



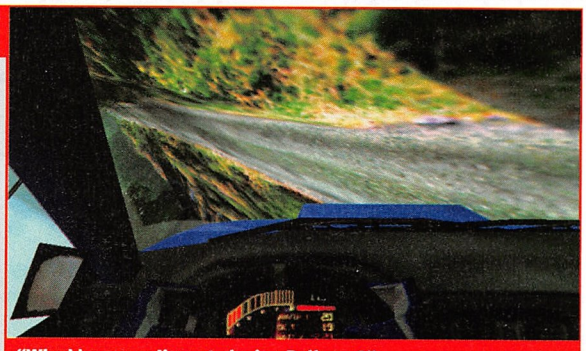
The crowd turned out in great numbers to cheer Ed home.




As in all proper rally sims, the track is frighteningly narrow.

## WHAT BECOMES OF THE BROKEN CAR-TED

**Just ask the great Colin McRae.** Damaging a rally car is an expensive exercise, and due to his somewhat over exuberant "car is second, winning is first" nature, he sadly lost his spot in the Subaru WRX World Rally team. Luckily for us virtual competitors, our job is safe. However this doesn't stop the car falling to bits if treated badly. Hit a tree and your reward is some serious panel damage; run in the red too long and engine power is slowly lowered. The primary devil for any winning rally team is bad vehicle condition. Keeping the car in good condition - by perhaps backing off slightly in those tricky corners - can minimise the time required for each service stop. Losing a few seconds overall is a decent price to pay to avoid blowing the engine coolant and limping home from half-way through a rally in 2nd gear.



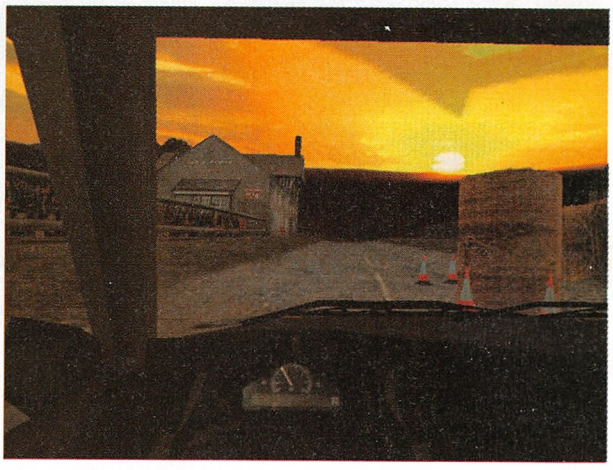
"Whaddya mean I'm not playing Rollcage?"



"Sorry, I thought you said 'left'!"



That dynamic gravel in all its glory.



entire thing - twice! As this is accomplished, the most astounding scenery is splashed onto the screen. Rays of sun shining through the canopy of gigantic oak trees hugging the side of the road to massive 100ft cliff-faces mere metres from the path of your car. On top of the high level of skill required to traverse such suicide runs, the odd stack of logs and large rocks are scattered at the most inconvenient spots along the route. Additional challenges include weather conditions that change dramatically from stage to stage, from thunderstorm ridden nights complete with lightning effects to the dangerous foggy mornings on the snow plains of the Scottish highlands.

Vehicles have been modelled to a considerably high standard and as each stage is traversed and the prangs increase, real-time damage becomes apparent (smashed windscreens, severely dented chassis and the odd missing bonnet). The cars are very convincing from any aspect and, by exploiting the comprehensive camera angles offered during a replay, the realistic touches become apparent. Grass, dirt, snow and mud are thrown up as the car flies by, while the vehicle itself jumps and bounces at the realistically shaped roads. I was left wondering whether or not it was real!

### Immersive chainsaws

Adding to the immersive nature of the sim is the glorious audio. Each car sports its own unique engine sound and turbo pops. The rumble of various surface conditions and the screech of rubber on bitumen lets you know when you're pushing too hard. Additionally, each location sports a background noise of sorts, be it chainsaws in action through the forests of Wales, the tranquil chirping of birds on a chilly English morning or the roar of the supportive crowds. I can honestly say from first-hand experience behind the wheel of a WRX rally edition that the engine audio on the Impreza at least is very accurate indeed.

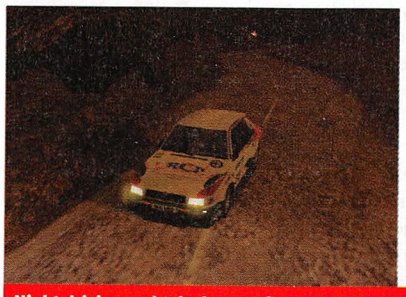
If Rally Championship 2000 is lacking in any aspect, it is perhaps the physics department. Each car, though realistically depicted graphically, fails to capture the true feel of handling a rally vehicle. Steering is extremely twitchy, and seems act on more of an on/off trigger rather than a realistic linear feel. This doesn't necessarily diminish the appeal of the game, it simply demands a different style of driving in order to master each stage.

Rally Championship 2000 has set a benchmark in the rally simulation genre and is quite clearly the best rally game on the market to date. Colin McRae Rally 2 will have its work cut out to beat this.

***Edward Fox***

**"...the odd stack of logs and large rocks..."**







Night driving and teh chance of storms add a welcome element of unpredictability.

**PLUS**

*http://www.netcomuk.co.uk/~colin.s/index.htm*
Everthing you wanted to know about Rally in the UK.




**PCPP**

**FOR:** Awesome visuals, great sound, hours of playability.

**AGAINST:** Car physics leave a little to be desired, track appears a little too small via in-car view.

**88**

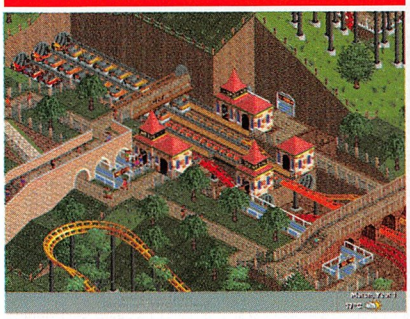
# Rollercoaster Tycoon:
## Added Attractions Pack

● **Genre:** Fun Park Construction/Megalomania Sim ● **Players:** 1 ● **Developer:** Chris Sawyer ● **Publisher:** Hasbro Interactive ● **Distributor:** Hasbro Interactive ● **Price:** $TBA ● **Rating:** G ● **Available:** Now
● **Need:** Rollercoaster Tycoon, P90, 16MB RAM, 4X CD-ROM, 1MB SVGA card, 45MB HD. ● **Want:** PII 350, 64MB RAM, 180MB HD, 4MB SVGA card, 8x CD-ROM ● **URL:** www.rollercoasterycoon.com

Here's another chance to create the ultimate rollercoaster.



Mini-golf madness.






Pure genius or pure evil?

Rollercoaster Tycoon entered the gaming world at the beginning of 1999, offering a new slant on the "sim" genre. It was basically recreating Theme Park but with a more exclusive focus on rollercoaster construction. You still had to manage food stores, staff, research, merry-go-rounds and guests but the level of depth didn't really extend to the managerial side. But really, it did a great job of it all.

Any criticism levelled at RC Tycoon comes mostly in the form of: "What? You can't speed up time?" or "Interest is just a joke - if I could only get my car loan from the bank in this game...". So you're waiting to hear that this expansion pack makes RC Tycoon the game it was meant to be, aren't you? AREN'T YOU?? Well, sorry ladies and gents, this isn't the case.

### Ragtime techno horror

As you'd expect the game is almost completely unchanged. The new features come in the form of new rollercoasters, 30 new scenarios, other new rides, new shops and various other bells and whistles. There are some nice touches as far as the smaller additions go. You can now construct a miniature golf course, an absurd house and a circus tent among others. It's now possible to choose the music that is played in each ride. These include rock, wild west, techno, ragtime, and horror. This is a nice way to customise your attractions. That said, there are new themes in the scenery, including dinosaurs and a ghostly theme.

### The Fabio Incident

All of this is great but let's look at the significant additions: the new rollercoasters and scenarios. These new flavours of rollercoaster include: steel twister, side friction, Virginia reel and steel wild mouse. The new coasters offer unique challenges in an idle track design and in this sense can fill different needs in your park. There are various additions to existing coasters, like vertical loops and barrel rolls, making it even easier to create those ultra-extreme nausea ratings we all love! The new scenarios seem to be the only concession made to the game's low difficulty level. In a good number of them you are very restricted for real estate, making creative ride placement essential.

### Well worth it

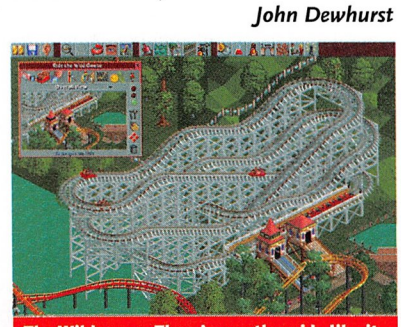
The most annoying features of Rollercoaster Tycoon - that being time manipulation and those ridiculous interest rates - remain untouched, which is really frustrating. But that's only because this is a high quality game even as it stands. The game hasn't dated at all since last January when I played it fanatically. This add-on pack is well worth the attention of any RC Tycoon or sim fan and certainly got me back into it. This'll certainly keep you satisfied until Theme Park World and until that hope-beyond-hope... Rollercoaster Tycoon 2!

***John Dewhurst***

**"...various other bells and whistles."**

**PLUS**

*ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/grcurran/vomitum.htm*
**What do you get when you put "fun park sickness" into a search engine? Find out at the Vomitorium, the air sickness bag museum. At least this guy's not on the street...**



The Wildgoose. There's no other ride like it.

**PCPP**

**FOR:** An excellent addition to a top game. More rides, more themes, options, the lot!

**AGAINST:** More of the same. An add-on pack does not a new game make.

**81**

# Sid Meier's Alpha Centauri: Alien Crossfire

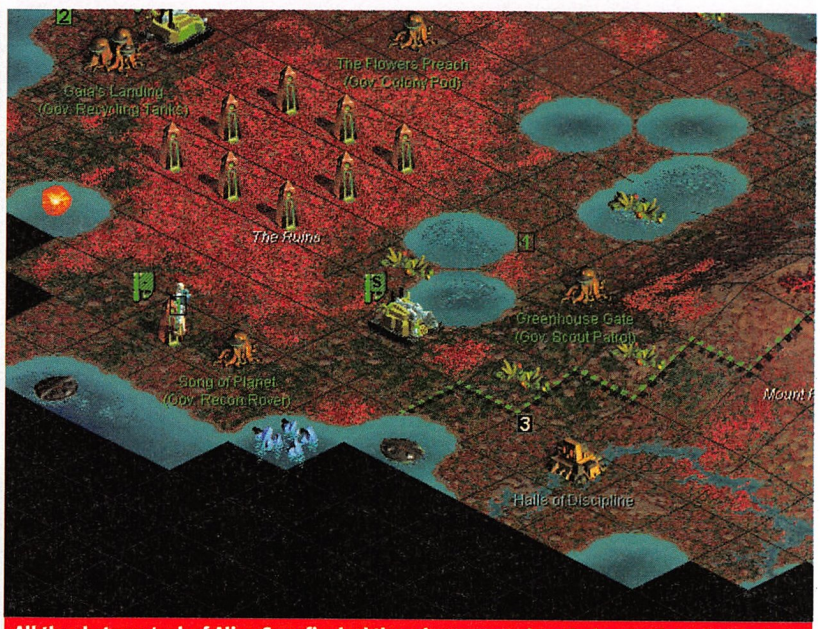
● **Genre:** Extended Turn-based Strategy ● **Players:** 1-7 ● **Developer:** Firaxis Games ● **Publisher:** Electronic Arts ● **Distributor:**Electronic Arts ● **Price:** $TBA ● **Rating:** G ● **Available:** Now
● **Need:** Alpha Centauri, P133, 50MB HD, 16MB RAM, 4xCD ● **Want:** PII 300, 32MB RAM, 360MB HD ● **URL:** www.firaxis.com

In which EA deal us some more SMAC.










**All the shots we took of Alien Crossfire had the colours messed up. So here's Alpha Centauri.**

**"It's refreshing to see an expansion pack adjust the way the game plays..."**

Alpha Centauri has been just the latest in Sid Meier's run of hits in strategy gaming. This is not surprising, since the quality of the games has always been extremely high. What is surprising is how impressive Alien Crossfire is. Add-on packs are always a little iffy - ever get the feelings you've been short-changed for those 50 extra missions of exactly the same game? Not so with Alien Crossfire. This expansion pack builds on the strengths of Alpha Centauri by expanding on all facets of this complex game.

## Dumb name for a planet

The most obvious change is the new scenario. No longer is it seven human factions vying for supremacy on the hostile world of Planet; now you have the added conflict of an Alien civil war to contend with. Two opposing factions of an alien race that once inhabited Planet, have crash landed on the surface, bringing their conflict to your conflict. Together with the two new alien factions you have five new human factions to play with. These are varied enough - from even the factions in the original - to offer new possibilities in gameplay.

Some factions are quite significantly stronger too, like the Free Drones and the Nautilus Pirates. This obviously affects how the game progresses and can verge on an imbalance of forces. Perhaps most interesting in this regard is the alien factions who are strong and aggressive from the outset. This changes play and makes things really interesting as a human faction. Playing the aliens is not as interesting, since you are locked in a civil war, so diplomatic relations are much less of an option. But the chance to use this alien aggression to your advantage as a human faction is too good to pass up!

## Nicely balanced

There are many additions to all aspects of the game, as you'd expect. From new technologies and secret projects, to new special abilities and weapons, there's now a lot more to do in Alpha Centauri. More impressive for me, is the way that Alien Crossfire aims to rectify some of the "flaws" of the original. In this way, the developers have had a chance to see how gamers play the game and eliminate some of the less fair ways of winning. One of these corrections is the balance of PSI units against weaponry and defences, so that PSI units can't overrun them. It's refreshing to see an expansion pack adjust the way the game plays with such attention.

There are some annoying glitches in the game, such as sound errors and minor gameplay flaws, but overall Alien Crossfire is a class package. It significantly expands on Alpha Centauri and will certainly revitalise any flagging interest in this great game. It adds the extra goodies to spice up the game, but these additions never compromise the gameplay. You're still playing a well-balanced strategy title. Fans of Alpha Centauri shouldn't be without Alien Crossfire.

*John Dewhurst*

**PLUS**

*www.geocities.com/CapitolHill/9820/*
**It's got nothing to do with aliens but how much do YOU know about the Spanish Civil War? Take a look.**



**PCPP**

**FOR:** A satisfying expansion of a quality game. New everything!

**AGAINST:** Some factions could be considered unbalanced. Minor problems that should be fixed with a patch.

**83**

# Rayman 2

● **Genre:** 3D Platform ● **Players:** 1 ● **Developer:** UbiSoft ● **Publisher:** UbiSoft ● **Distributor:** UbiSoft ● **Price:** TBA ● **Rating:** G ● **Available:** Now
● **Need:** P133, 32MB RAM, Win 95/8. 4x CD ROM, 3D Videocard (D3D, Glide) ● **Want:** P200, 64MB RAM, 8x CD ROM ● **URL:** www.rayman2.com

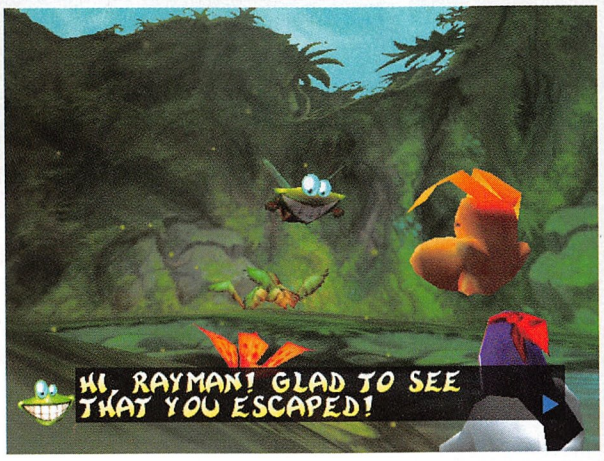
Yay! It's a cutesy 3D platform game for your PC!



Just how would they make a Rayman stuffed toy?



Shakespearean tragedy at its finest.







Eeeeek!

**"There's the obligatory mine cart level..."**

You'd think that not having any arms or legs would make it a bit tough to be the hero of a PC game. In fact the only limbless characters many gamers would be familiar with are the dead ones on the ground in Kingpin with their legs blasted off by a sadistic homie.

But UbiSoft mascot and 3D platform hero Rayman seems to do pretty well without a full set of limbs. He does have hands and feet mind you, but don't ask me how that works.

Despite his weirdness the little guy with big eyes, a dog-like face and helicopter ears is a household name back in his home country of France and he even has his own animated TV series. His popularity looks set to increase, at home and abroad, with the release of Rayman 2.

## Cute

The sequel has been in development since 1997 and it shows in the quality of the final product. Rayman 2 is without a doubt the best looking platform game on the market and the way textures, lighting and plasma effects have been used take the level design to a whole new level. Developers of many more grown up games could learn a thing or two from this cute platformer.

And cute is the best way to describe the game, but that's not necessarily a bad thing. When playing Rayman 2 you get the feel that you're controlling a Saturday morning cartoon and the wacky cast of characters certainly contributes to this.

Rayman's best friend is an odd, frog-like creature with 650 children; and he's also assisted in his quest to rid the world of marauding robo-pirates from outer space by a fairy, a whale, a snake and a well-muscled freak named Clark.

There's a lot of variety in the action, too. It's not all your usual run and jump platforming gameplay. Rayman's ears (or hair, I can't really tell) double as helicopter blades and he can use these to glide, and later fly from place to place. Climbing, swimming and swinging arm to arm also play a part in achieving the various goals.

## Glowing lums

After the first few levels, which serve to give you a good feel for the game, things get a lot faster and more difficult. There's the obligatory mine cart level, but others have you flying a small plane through a wrecked ship - very difficult - or sliding down an icy slope while shooting enemies and collecting little glowing power-ups called lums.

Rayman 2, like any platformer on PC, really requires the use of a gamepad to get the best level of control, but even with the keyboard the character and camera movement is quite good.

For platform fans this is a must have. And even those who are cynical about what the genre has to offer might find themselves pleasantly surprised.

***Elton Cane***

**PLUS**

*www.icbl.org/*
**International Campaign to Ban Landmines homepage. Help stop innocent victims losing life and limbs**



**PCPP**

**FOR:** Amazing environments and real-time effects combined with great character animation make the game look like a well-produced cartoon.

**AGAINST:** Some might find it a bit childish while others might be put off by the difficulty.

**89**

# Pharaoh

● **Genre:** Little Blokes ● **Players:** 1 ● **Developer:** Impressions ● **Publisher:** Sierra ● **Distributor:**Dataflow ● **Price:** $TBA ● **Rating:** G ● **Available:** Now
● **Need:** P133, 32MB RAM, 460MB HDD, 4xCD ● **Want:** PII, 64MB RAM ● **URL:** www.pharaoh1.com

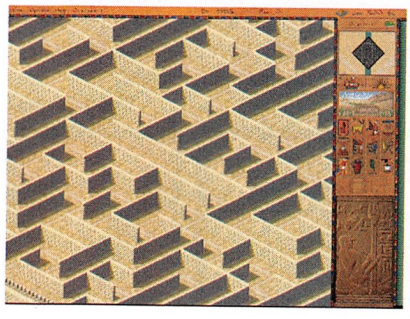
My first reaction upon playing Pharaoh: "Well, it's Caesar III, isn't it?" Everyone else's reaction upon seeing Pharaoh: "Well, it's Caesar III, isn't it?"

To summarise, then: Pharaoh is Caesar III, but with pyramids, hieroglyphs and huge obelisks. There's no escaping the fact that Impressions have produced a game that is nearly identical to their previous one. Yet, likewise, there's no denying that Pharaoh is infinitely superior to its predecessor. Besides the new historical setting, Impressions have tweaked and fine-tuned the gameplay in small but crucial ways. Though seemingly minor, these changes result in the almost complete alleviation of the little annoyances that flawed Caesar III.

## Little blokes return

For the uninitiated, Pharaoh is a "little blokes" game. Although it does feature military units, much greater weight is given to city-planning and economic management. All told, it's more akin to Sim City than Age of Empires. The crux of a city's economy is its road network: goods (grain, beer, pottery) and services (religion, entertainment, education) are only provided to the population when a worker from the respective industry walks through a residential area - and even then it's only those particular homes that benefit. It's an unusual system, relying upon a kind of mobile capitalism unheard of in the real world, but in the context of the game it works surprisingly well.

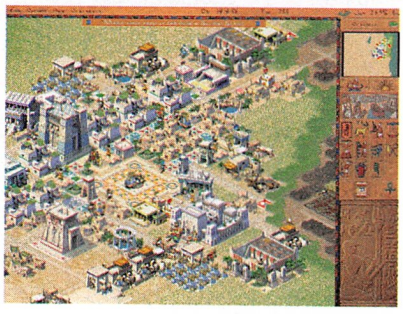
Well, it works in Pharaoh at least, even if it didn't quite succeed in Caesar III. The two most important changes to the game involve how workers travel around the city. Before, they used to follow the same quite short routes each time they ventured out of their commercial abode, and there was nothing you could do about it. Here, the routes are longer for a start, meaning the same worker can service more of the population, and better still roadblocks can be placed to deter workers from visiting certain areas. It's pointless, for instance, for an engineer to pass by the farming areas, so you simply block that road and he'll turn back toward the buildings that need his services. Anyone who played Caesar III will appreciate the joy inherent in this inspired design.






(above) David prefers a clean, grid-based city, while (below) Malcolm opts for a more haphazard approach.

**"...greater weight is given to city planning..."**



## What about a patch?

The remainder notably different - though less significant - features exploit the Egyptian setting more so than radically altering the gameplay. Agriculture is now affected by the flooding of the Nile, with farmland fertility dependent on how extensive the flood is each year. Most of the other changes are purely cosmetic, which raises the question: why couldn't the gameplay enhancements - that is, minus the Egyptian setting - have been included in a patch for Caesar III? It's this situation that makes reviewing Pharaoh so fraught with difficulty. On its own, it's an undeniably great game; against that, it's almost exactly the same as an eighteen month old very good game. So, if I take the original score I gave Caesar III (88% PCPP#31), subtract 3% for Sierra's cynicism, add 10% for the few new features, minus 4% for there being so few new features, factor in 3% depreciation over time, and... Hmm, wasn't that an unpredictable result, eh?

In the end, I'd recommend Pharaoh to everyone - except those people who bought Caesar III. Ironically, they're the only ones who will fully appreciate how good a game this is.

*David Wildgoose*

**PLUS**

The citizens of Egypt love their juggling. In fact, the expert Pharaoh player will have a juggler on every street corner. Visit *www.juggling.org* and see what the fuss is about.




**PCPP**

**FOR:** The most anally perfect little blokes management game around. The couple of gameplay tweaks do actually make a huge difference.

**AGAINST:** Unfortunately, there are only a few gameplay tweaks. It's really Caesar III all over again.

**88**

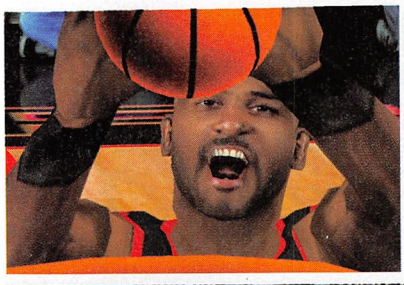
# NBA Live 2000

● **Genre:** NBA Sim ● **Players:** 1-8 ● **Developer:** EA Sports ● **Publisher:** EA Sports ● **Distributor:** EA Sports ● **Price:** $69.95 ● **Rating:** G ● **Available:** Now
● **Need:** P166, 4MB video card, 90MB HD space, 32MB RAM ● **Want:** P300, 8MB video card, 165MB HD space, 64MB RAM ● **URL:** http://www.nbalive2000

## Jordan vs Wilt. Need we say more?

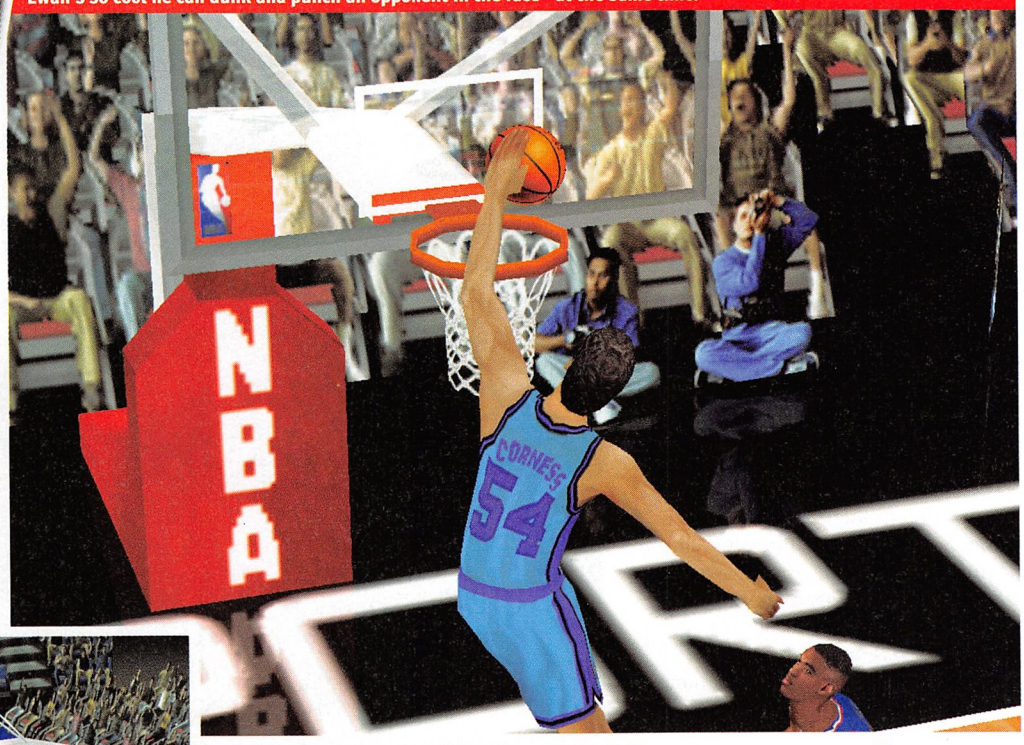
PC POWERPLAY GOLD AWARD NBA LIVE 2000 90%

Every year basketball nuts wait with bated breath for the release of the latest NBA Live, their only real source of PC basketball enjoyment. To use an age-old basketball analogy, NBA Live 2000 is a two-handed, double-pump, grab-your-nuts, tomahawk dunk from the free-throw line. Still worth two points... but looks a hell of a lot prettier.





Ewan's so cool he can dunk and punch an opponent in the face - at the same time.




**"...two-handed, double pump, grab-your-nuts, tomahawk dunk..."**

### I wanna be like...

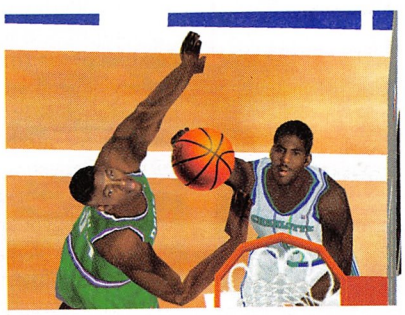
The biggest addition to the Live franchise is obviously the fact that Michael Jordan is now in the game. Even though it is two years after he retired, it's still good to see the best living basketballer (R.I.P. Wilt Chamberlain - also in the game, I must add) in a basketball game. Jordan is part of the new "Legends" feature of NBA Live, where you can play using All-Star teams from the 1950's through to the 1990's. These All-Star players are also available to be used on current NBA rosters once you've unlocked them by performing different tasks, like scoring 20 points in a three-point shootout or winning five season games in a row on the Superstar difficulty setting.

Another big addition to the series is the 1-on-1 mode. Here you can play with or against Jordan on an outdoor streetball court and try and take His Airness to the cleaners. The only way to unlock Jordan as a playable character for season mode is to beat him here, and it's a very tough ask (tip: I did it using Allen Iverson).

### Dentist mode

NBA Live 2000's graphics are nothing short of stunning. Each player's face is amazingly well reproduced, and if you're that keen you can even zoom (in replay mode) inside a player's mouth to see his back teeth! There are now also cutscenes that have been added for when a player is called for a foul or other stoppages in play, where the player will charge the ref to protest the call. While these look great, they tend to slow the game down a little more than you'd want. Thankfully the gameplay hasn't been greatly tinkered with, as there was nothing wrong with Live '99's.

Negative points? The commentary. Don Poier puts me to sleep and Reggie Theus, who's meant to be the "colour commentator", just repeats inane statements all game. Theus is new to the Live series and he needs to be used better or kicked off the team.



### Must-have

NBA Live 2000 is the must-have basketball game of the season. In terms of a complete package, with it's 1-on-1 mode, Legends feature and Michael Jordan, NBA Live 2000 wins the battle of the basketball sims, again.

***Ewan Corness***

### PLUS

*http://www.nike.com/jordan/*

**Did you know that Michael Jordan endorses a few products? Well he does! Check out all the products that he is flogging as the CEO of Jordan Brand, which comes under the Nike umbrella.**



**PCPP**

**FOR:** Mind blowing visuals, the addition of Michael Jordan.

**AGAINST:** The commentary leaves a bit to be desired.

**90**

# Gulf War:
## Operation Desert Hammer

● **Genre:** Military Blast-Fest ● **Players:** 1-8 ● **Developer:** 3DO ● **Publisher:** 3DO ● **Distributor:** Jack of all Games ● **Price:** $TBA ● **Rating:** G ● **Available:** Now
● **Need:** P166; 32MB RAM; 150 GB HD; 3D Video Card (D3D) ● **Want:** P200; 64MB RAM ● **URL:** www.gulfwarpc.com

In a refreshing change of pace, this military title is more action than sim.

While we all remain dedicated to our quest for the Holy Grail of simulation, sometimes it's nice just to blow things up! In Gulf War - Operation Desert Hammer, 3DO have given us a chance to do just that. It's simply an arcade game, but it might be fun for a little while - as long as you ignore the premise, the lack of realism, the cut scenes, and the polygons!

### Desert Beast

Gulf War puts you in command of a prototype M12 tank, tasked with paving the way to Baghdad so that Uncle Sam can finish off the "Desert Beast." No prizes for guessing who that is. The storyline is amply supported by dubbed newsreel footage, although the atmosphere it tries to create doesn't quite hit the mark. 3DO seem to have been unsure about which way to jump, as Gulf War is an uneasy mix of American patriotic hype and arcade shoot-em-up.

The M12 Hammer tank is a technological marvel, sporting guns, missiles, and the revolutionary OASIS (Operational Armour Stabilisation and Integration System) rechargeable armour. Power-ups and extra ammunition can be found hovering about the battlefield, and the OASIS can be regenerated by driving into the nearest pond... no surprises there! When you run out of ammunition (or you just can't be bothered anymore), air and artillery strikes are on call to finish the job.

### Arcade action

Arcade games need stacks of action and suspense, and Gulf War is a bit of a disappointment on those fronts. There's no real sense of mission structure or approach, as you just drive across 3D landscapes destroying everything in sight - a tactic that seems to work regardless of the actual objectives. While the pace is certainly fast, the M12 is so powerful and unstoppable that edge-of-the-seat excitement never really sets in. And although fire support options include stealth fighters, helicopters and MLRS (Multiple Launch Rocket System), the net result on the battlefield really is just a different type of explosion.

On the up side, the graphics are good for an arcade title, and the game has been targeted at users with lower-end systems. Gulf War's manual is small enough to fit in the CD case, and the interface is as simple as you can get - nine keys in single player mode, including the four directional arrows. This is not a difficult game to master.

Deathmatch play is available via LAN, modem or the internet, and victory conditions or time limits can be set for multiplay games. Online play is possibly where this game will find its niche, particularly with younger players.






**"...no surprises there!"**

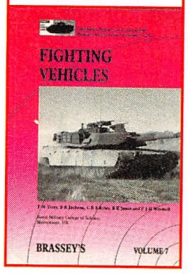
### Simple fun

Gulf War - Operation Desert Hammer might have been a great game a few years ago, but by today's standards it's really nothing special at all. Despite a cracking pace, repetition sets in quickly. Operation Desert Hammer won't lead to many late nights. This is a simple, solid arcade title that will briefly entertain you for a few hours. Worth a try for some light relief, but with only eighteen straightforward missions on offer it's a fairly expensive diversion.

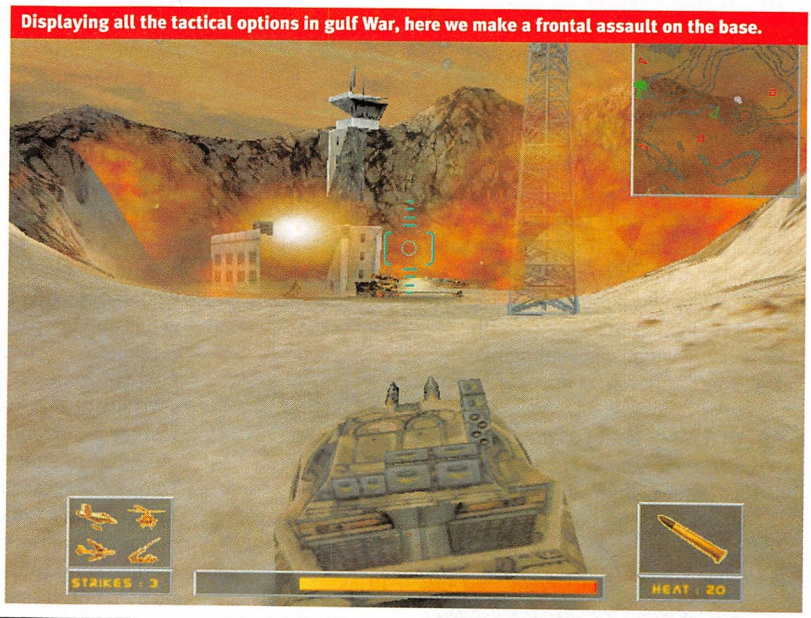
***Major Des McNicholas***

**PLUS**

**Can't decide between wheels or tracks? - *Brassey's Fighting Vehicles* is the ultimate resource for all things armoured. Written by the experts at the Royal Military College of Science in the UK, Fighting Vehicles gets right into the detail of weapon systems, protection, power trains and firepower. The final chapter gives you a glimpse into the future, stating the requirements of armoured fighting vehicles.**




**Displaying all the tactical options in gulf War, here we make a frontal assault on the base.**




PCPP

**FOR:** Good graphics for an arcade game, simple interface and a fast pace.

**AGAINST:** No sense of mission and limited unit types. The missions get repetitive quickly and this is definitely a no tactics zone.

**55**

# Thief Gold

● **Genre:** Sneaky Strategic Action ● **Players:** 1 ● **Developer:** Looking Glass ● **Publisher:** Eidos ● **Distributor:** Ozisoft ● **Price:** $49.95 ● **Rating:** MA ● **Available:** Now
● **Need:** P133, 32MB RAM, 4xCD, 200HDD ● **Want:** PII, 64MB RAM, 3D video card (D3D, Glide) ● **URL:** www.eidosinteractive.com/thiefgold/

To celebrate their success in PCPP's Game of the Century, Eidos re-release the official 3rd Best Game of All Time.

PC POWERPLAY PLATINUM AWARD THIEF GOLD 96%

Dodgy marketing ploy aside, Thief Gold is an essential purchase regardless of whether or not you already own Thief. For the veteran cat-burglar there are three fiendishly crafted new missions to complement the game's darkly compelling story, as well as several telling alterations to the twelve original missions. For the uninitiated there's the tantalising prospect of discovering for the very first time the incredible challenge and invention present in Looking Glass' masterpiece. Either way it's a damn good deal.

## "What was that?"

I should make one thing very clear: Thief Gold is not an addon or expansion pack. Instead it's a stand-alone game containing the original Thief in its entirety, as well as three additional missions and a movie about the development of Thief 2 (though you've already seen it on the cover CD of PCPP#44, I might add) that is light on in terms of gameplay footage, but nonetheless interesting as a kind of behind-the-scenes glimpse at Looking Glass.

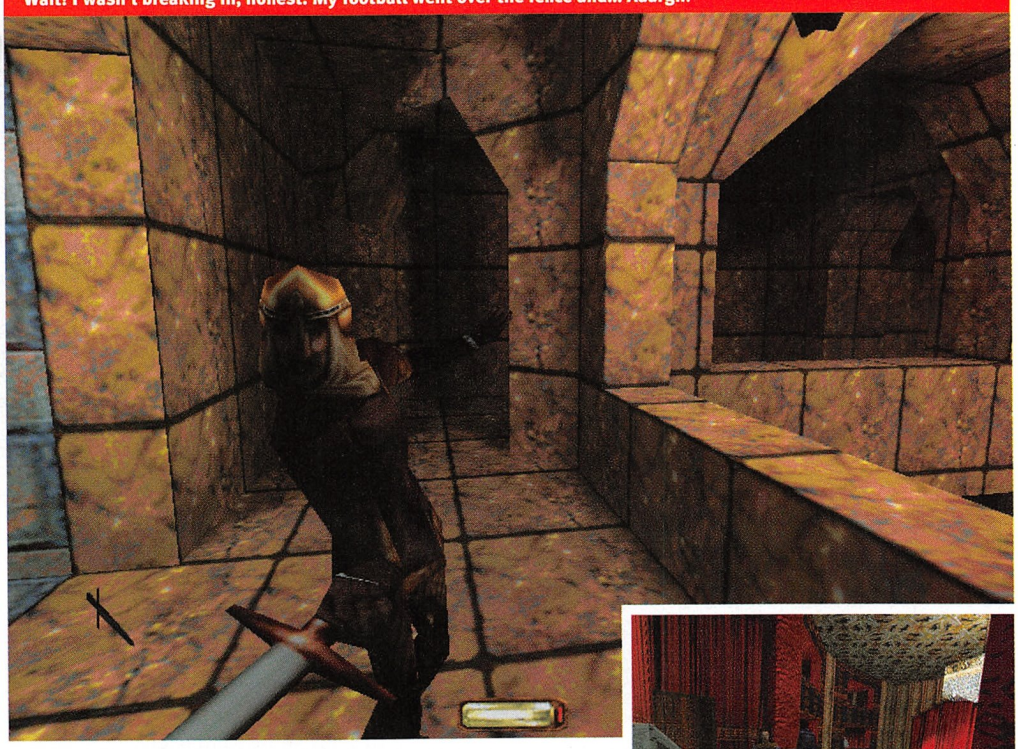
Significantly, those three extra missions do not extend beyond the original's story, but are integrated into it and succeed in fleshing out several narrative features that were perhaps slightly undernourished beforehand. Specifically, Garrett will visit the Thieves' Guild after gaining revenge over Ramirez in the Assassins mission, further enhancing his reputation as a master thief - and an indiscriminate one at that. The other two missions (The Mage Towers and Song of the Caverns) expand upon Garrett's search for the Elemental talismans, spreading his quest over four levels as opposed to two.

## "Ah, nothing but rats..."

The three missions are all extremely good and utterly faithful to the brilliantly immersive world of Thief. Reflecting the minor complaint that Thief was too heavily populated by monsters (undead and otherwise), each mission is situated in predominately living, breathing human locales. This disappointed me a little - my favourite Thief mission being Return to the Cathedral - though I can understand the developer's motives.



"Wait! I wasn't breaking in, honest. My football went over the fence and... Aaargh!"



**"...further enhancing his reputation as a master thief..."**



The Thieves' Guild uses an amazing amount of speech to depict the intricate factional warring between two rival gangs and the paranoia resulting from a recent job they undertook together. Huge open outdoor locations are the specialty of The Mage Towers, creating vast areas surrounded by enormous buildings in a manner few thought the Dark Engine capable of. Beginning like The Lost City, Song of the Caverns doesn't waste time in completely confounding your expectations, offering up some of the strangest scenes you're likely to see in a game, and eventually turning into the best of the trio.

## "Arrrgh!"

No new items or weapons have been included to bolster Garrett's bag of tricks, which is a small disappointment alleviated somewhat by the surprise appearance of several new enemies. I don't want to spoil that surprise, but just think of the themes of the new levels and you might have some idea of what to expect.

If I had to criticise Thief Gold in any way, it would be to mention that the new levels can get confusing - Thief is already difficult enough (particularly on the aptly-named Expert). A tad more elaboration in the mission objectives would have been of welcome assistance - maybe a few more comments from Garrett himself at certain moments? That'll be 4% off, then.

***David Wildgoose***

**PLUS**

Another reminder to investigate the fan-made missions springing up on the net. *www.thief-darkproject.com/teg/index.html*




**PCPP**

**FOR:** It's still Thief, it's still like nothing else you can play and it's still amazingly good. Three terrific new missions. Great value on its own.

**AGAINST:** Not such great value if you already have Thief.

**96**

# M25 Racer

● **Genre:** Road Rage ● **Players:** 1 ● **Developer:** Davilex ● **Publisher:Activision** ● **Distributor:** Activision ● **Price:** TBA ● **Rating:** G ● **Available:** Now
● **Need:** P166, 16MB RAM, 50 HDD, 4xCD ● **Want:** PII 233, 32MB RAM, 256 HDD, 3D video card (Glide), 8xCD ● **URL:** www.davilex.com

It's about as much fun as "driving" down Parramatta Rd during peak hour.

Every now and then a game comes along that defies all expectations and completely redefines the term "crap game!" In fantastically underwhelming style, M25 Racer from Davilex fits the bill perfectly.

## Old school

With gameplay that resurrects the concept of Outrun on the Commodore 64 with a dash of 3D, M25 Racer sees you racing production vehicles from the Mini Minor to the DeLorean of Back To The Future fame around the city of London and its surrounding areas. There are obstacles to be navigated, cops to outrun and rush-hour traffic to navigate through. On top of the single race option, there are also two cups to be won and, in true tradition of an arcade racer, bonus tracks and cars to be unlocked by winning both races and money. Each car sports various statistics, however these appear to make little difference to the performance as the only changes between each car seems to be in the speed and grip area. The most redeeming feature of M25 Racer is the tracks themselves - gorgeous graphics and wonderfully complete scenery zip past as car is driven at breakneck speeds. Speeding from Westminster to Buckingham Palace is truly a visual treat, with lovingly modelled buildings and roads as far as the eye can see. The developers have obviously put a lot of work into this area of M25.

## Cotton smoke

The cars themselves are extremely primitive in design and resemble something of an egg on wheels with their very basic textures. Collision detection is also horribly implemented, as is demonstrated as soon as you hit an obstacle during the race. The car need only come within a few metres of a witch's hat before it blasts into the air in perfect synchronisation with every other obstacle hit. Furthermore, lampposts and roadwork signs simply collapse when hit, which detracts immensely from any sign of realism within the game. In a pathetic attempt to re-create the effect of a screeching smoke producing tyre, the end result is laughable. Tyre smoke resembles spurts of cotton buds, which actually shoot FORWARD from the car. (Gee, if this were a real-life conundrum, it would certainly make it hard to see when racing). Worst of all, when colliding with drone cars you will actually stop dead; if you hit them from behind, it's necessary to then reverse in order to get past. Helping alleviate the tragic stop/start action during a race is a limited turbo boost, which greatly helps acceleration from a standstill.



Well, the castle on the left looks nice...

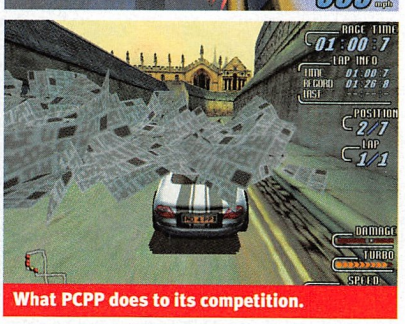



**"Collision detection is also horribly implemented..."**









What PCPP does to its competition.




## Nice tunes

Audio is, unfortunately, aligned in quality with the rest of the game. With no noticeable difference between the effects of each vehicle, the sound of each car's engine simply appears to have been an afterthought. When the car hits a bump or obstacle in its path, a sharp "pang" is heard. One is left to wonder if you actually hit a roadwork sign or a tin can in disguise. When being chased by the police, sirens are heard along with the occasional "chasing suspect speeding in a Porsche" radio chatter. If anything good can be found with the audio, it's surely the pre- and post-race music tracks that really set a cool funky mood, which is deceptive of the dismal quality of the game itself.

M25 Racer is an extremely poor effort, no matter which way you look at it, and will appeal to only the most rookie of PC racing gamers. Give this one a wide berth!

*Edward Fox*

**PLUS**

*http://dir.yahoo.com/Recreation/Games/Computer_Games/Titles/Simulation/Racing_and_Driving/*
Here is the Yahoo Motor Game listing, find a REAL game!



**PCPP**

**FOR:** Lovely trackside detail, funky mood setting tunes.

**AGAINST:** Awful car physics, terrible collision detection combined with an outdated concept.

**25**

# Heroes of Might & Magic III

With the expansion pack just released, it's time to dust down the chainmail, sharpen the broadsword and return to Erathia and kill some orcs.



Heroes of Might & Magic III never quite seemed to attain the dizzy heights of success enjoyed by its predecessor. Sure, it sold remarkably well and built a substantial following amongst the online community, but still not enough to eclipse the almost fanatical devotion to which the series had grown accustomed with Heroes II.

Why this should be the case is not easy to pin down. Without question, Heroes III is the superior game; once you've played it and learnt to appreciate its subtle improvements, there's no way you could go back to the earlier games. The vastly improved AI (especially when it came to casting spells during combat) meant that significantly fewer glaring holes were open to exploitation. The expanded battlefield and truly inspired "Wait" command both provided much-needed room for greater tactical depth. By allowing each hero to lead seven troop stacks, the first-level units were actually useful - unlike in Heroes II where they were instantly discarded only weeks into each game. Thanks to measures such as these, Heroes III became a far more challenging game. Perhaps, though, these enhancements were too subtle or maybe seen as unnecessary complications by the "beer

# Armageddon's Blade

● **Genre:** Expansion Pack ● **Players:** 1-8 ● **Developer:** New World Computing ● **Publisher:** 3DO ● **Distributor:** Jack of all Games ● **Price:** $49.95 ● **Rating:** G8 ● **Available:** Now

Armageddon's Blade has an interesting history. When it was first revealed at last year's E3, the addon had a distinctly science fiction theme. The plan was to pick up on and elaborate the events at the end of the last Might & Magic RPG, as the previous Heroes games had done. Thus, there was to be a new town type called the Forge, from which various laser-wielding robots and machine-made troops would be recruited, while one of the heroes was known as the Technician.

Amid howls of protest from the more vocal and uncompromising sections of the Heroes community, New World Computing backed down and removed the Forge and the accompanying sci-fi flavour. What we now have in Armageddon's Blade is a town called the Conflux and the return of many Heroes II creatures absent from the third iteration. The Conflux features an assortment of elementals (the base creatures we've seen before, while their upgrades are totally new - the Fire Elemental, for example, upgrades to an Energy Elemental), plus old friends like Sprites and Phoenixes. Bizarrely, neither the Air Elemental nor its upgrade, the Storm Elemental, can fly, and only two troops (and upgraded ones at that) have ranged attacks. It's very much a magic-based town, too, with native heroes possessing excellent spell power and knowledge and access to the Magic University where they can learn all four magic schools.



In all, the Conflux is a real disappointment. I feel NWC should have had the strength to continue their original plans, rather than trying to placate the die-hard traditionalists. The selection of extra neutral creatures only reinforces my feeling on this matter. Reviving peasants, halflings, nomads and rogues simply smacks of desperation and a paucity of ideas. In this regard, Armageddon's Blade seem less like a new lease of life and more like a tired retread or, at best, a slice of nostalgia.

Elsewhere, things look appreciably better. The additional six campaigns are all more challenging than those that came with the original Heroes III, while most of the new scenarios come in two versions - one with allies and one without. Gameplay options have expanded to include the ability to garrison troops at a mine, to purchase regular troops even once a dwelling has been upgraded, and to control a castle Arrow Towers with the Artillery skill. The best news for hardcore Heroes, however, is the introduction of a completely customisable Random Map Generator. And, for once, it actually produces decent maps!

On balance, especially considering the quality of the campaigns, Armageddon's Blade does offer value for money. It's just that, well, it could have offered so much more.



You can see your ally's castle for the entire game.



The fortress is one of the toughter town types to play. Judicious use of the Mighty Gorgons is essential.






The new Conflux forces vs the old Dungeon troops.



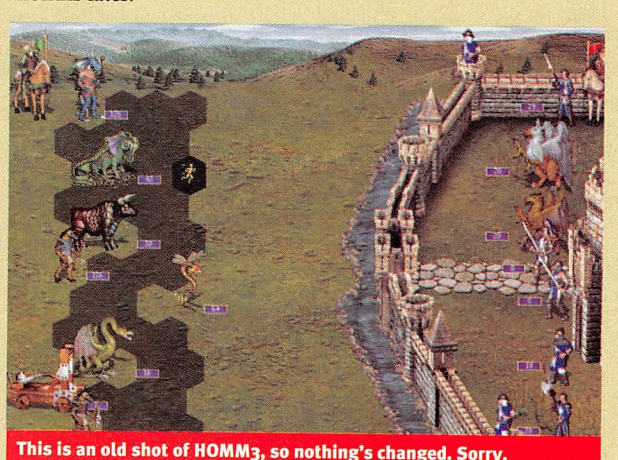

**"After a generous tip, the barkeep whispers: "Good luck is not to be had in the presence of Devils."**

and pretzels" crowd who lapped up Heroes II.

Meanwhile, endless debate has arisen over which town type is really the best with support tending to fall fairly evenly between the Tower and Castle (though a few still swear by the Dungeon). Similar discussions over which creature is the most powerful tends to favour the Archangel with the Titan close behind, and in a one-on-one fight this is probably true. Factor in cost, however, and Vampire Lords, Naga Queens, Champions and even Marksmen must come under consideration. Which is the real beauty of this game - it's strategy is so deep, it caters for so many different techniques and tactics, that we've only just scratched the surface some nine months later.

**REVIEWED:** Issue 35
**SCORED:** 94%
**WHAT WE SAID THEN:** "What separates Heroes III from the run-of-the-mill, resource management and little blokes fighting each other type of game is the sheer breadth and, at times, staggering depth this unassuming and seemingly uncomplicated game has to offer. Heroes of Might & Magic is utterly magnificent."


HEROES OF MIGHT & MAGIC III
The Restoration Of Erathia

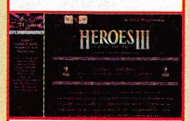


This is an old shot of HOMM3, so nothing's changed. Sorry.

## PLUS

Here's a roundup of the most useful Heroes III sites on the web:

THE ASTRAL WIZARD - the most comprehensive source of maps and news.
*http://www.astralwizard.com*




TOURNAMENT OF HONOR - the most popular Heroes III tournament.
*http://www.simyar.com/heroes3/*



H3 TRIO - concise walkthroughs for each campaign plus an incredibly detailed analysis of the game's combat engine and schools of magic.
*http://www.h3trio.com/wizardsofwar.html*

CHRISTOPH NAHR'S MANUAL ADDENDA - better than a Heroes III FAQ.
*http://pweb.de.uu.net/christoph.nahr/HoMM3.html*

CELESTIAL HEAVENS - a decent all-encompassing site with a bit of everything.
*http://www.strategyplanet.com/homm3/*

# EM@IL GAMES

● **Genre:** Email Games ● **Players:** 1-2 ● **Distributor:** Hasbro ● **Need:** Pentium, 8MB RAM, Modem ● **Want:** 16MB RAM




We suspect it was Dewhurst with the Candlestick in the Kitchen.




Checkmate in four

Hasbro Interactive is one of the few games publishers out with such a noble aim: to create family gaming entertainment. No violence or scantily-clad females, these guys are creating for a specific market: children and easily offended adults. They haven't done too badly either - Rollercoaster Tycoon and Tonka Workshop are two recent quality Hasbro products. When you have such a limited target audience, you either have to be REALLY inventive all the time, or produce some filler every so often.

This brings us to Hasbro's range of email titles. These are some of the most famous board games or amusements around, put onto your home PC and made for play between two (or more) email addresses. You trade moves progressively by email until (possibly weeks later) someone emerges as the victor.

Most of the titles are fairly self-evident. **Chess**, **backgammon**, **draughts** and **Cluedo** take place just as they do in a face-to-face game. You make a move and then send it to your opponent, who sends their move back, etc. Battleship and Soccer differ slightly, and have been adjusted to better suit the email format.

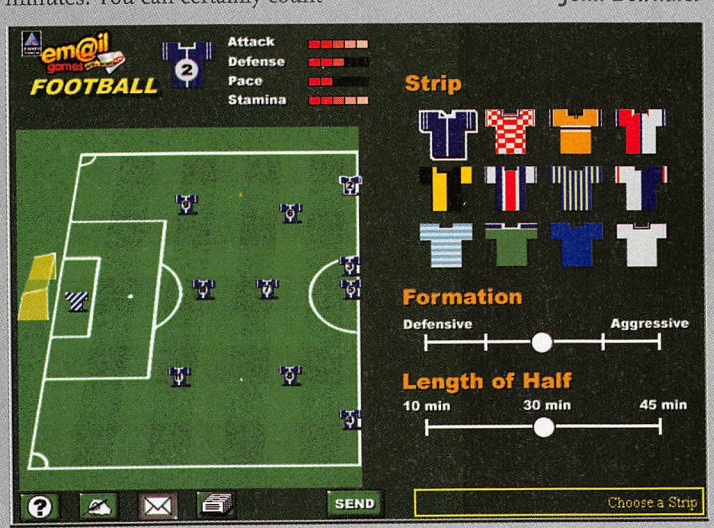
**Battleship** recreates the action of the board game where you try to destroy an opponent's fleet and vice versa. It has two types of game: classic and fleet commander option. The fleet commander is an expanded style of play. You can assemble your own personal choice of fleet and during the game vessels can move around the board, offering longer, more involved play. All of the ships have special functions that allow them ranged and extended attacks or invisibility.

**Soccer** is played in a similar way, you arrange your field and then trade turns with your opponent. Email soccer is an offensive game, i.e. you don't have an opportunity to actively defend. You can pass, dribble or shoot within your team and your turn continues until you lose possession. Then your moves are mailed to your opponent who has his turn and so on.

One major disappoint is that you can't play this collection of decent time-wasters by yourself. The other is that when you do play against another, games can take a bloody long time. I imagine the average game of Battleship would take at least 50 or 60 moves between two players. If you play (i.e. send email) twice a day then that's a little over two weeks for one game. I don't know many people with this kind of patience, especially since you can have a game face-to-face, in around ten minutes. You can certainly count most children out of this game!

Obviously, **Chess**, **Backgammon** and to a lesser extent **Cluedo**, will work well in this capacity but you have to wonder what Soccer is doing in there. The quality of the products is generally quite high and for what they aim to do, they are quite successful. My only reservation is that these games have a very small focus and therefore, their appeal is limited.

*John Dewhurst*



# AUSTIN POWERS OPERATION TRIVIA

● **Genre:** Wacky quiz show trivia game ● **Players:** 1-2 ● **Developer:** Berkley ● **Publisher:** Sierra

In this trivia game, you start by deciding "who's evil and who's working it" as you team up with Austin and Dr Evil in "Win, Lose or Die - Live from the Electric psychedelic pussycats swingers club". And then it's straight to the questions.

Operation Trivia is from the creators of the You Don't know Jack series, and with exception to the theme, there isn't much difference between the two. The host of YDKJ reprises his role in OT, and pretty much delivers the same jokes too. Up to two can play a seven question match, with various question styles including the 'Keep Away' and 'Crazy Chain'. Points are in millions of dollars, and whoever has the most cash wins. To keep things semi-interesting in the single player option, you have to beat a pre-set amount. The price to beat is often around $136,000,000, which means you're only allowed a couple of wrong answers before catching up becomes an almost impossible ask. Not a satisfying state of affairs at all - the challenge is far too demanding.

Besides the very poorly impersonated Austin Powers and Dr Evil voiceovers, there really isn't that much Austin related questions - it all seems to be based on pop culture from the 70's, 80's and 90's instead. The other downer is the length of each match, whether there are one or two players, there are still only seven questions to a game. More options would have been very welcome.

However, if you are a Powers fan, you'll enjoy the background displays and short animated sequences. Just don't expect to have your vast and expansive bank of Austin Powers related trivia put to the test.

***Agata Budinska***

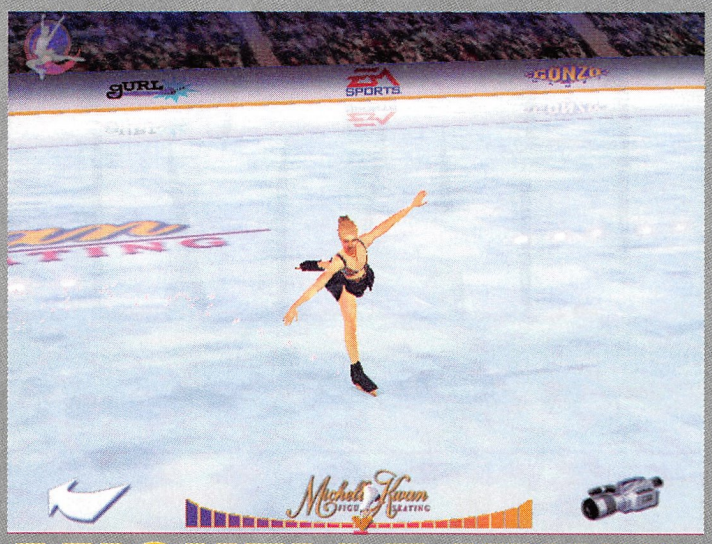









Funny stuff, we're sure you'll agree!




# MICHELLE KWAN FIGURE SKATING

● **Genre:** Little-girl fantasy click-a-thon. ● **Players:** 1 ● **Developer:** Gonzo ● **Publisher:** Electronic Arts

You are Michelle Kwan, the youngest sensation ever to strap on some skates and dance the ice. And she needs some help in executing her routine. Who knows, get chummy enough and you may even be able to score the elusive perfect 6.0.

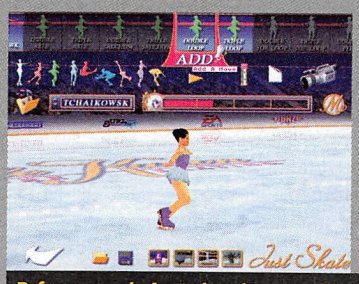
This game was developed for girls under the age of about 14, with little to no skill needed to play. Game play is minimal - the click of your mouse at the right time is all you need to score high. Really, more time will be spent off the ice perfecting your skater's appearance than anywhere else. You can design your own costume, pick your figure, skin colour, hair and even scan in your face to be put on the skater model. Once you're done, you can create your own routine in a choice of four settings and a range of music - from Chopin to dance.

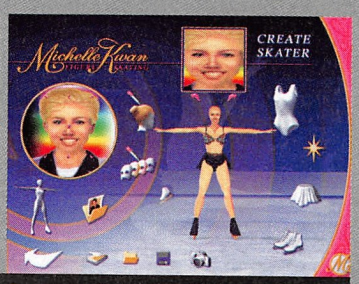
To sweeten the entire deal, the distributors have even included with the package a replica of the lucky charm Michelle wears every time she competes! Although absolutely no guarantee has been given that using this charm will any profound effect on your children out there on the ice rink. Shame about that.

The interface is ever so user-friendly, with voice overs by Michelle Kwan herself to help guide you through the exercise. They've even included footage of the child-star competing to inspire you to do your best.

This title is perfect for younger girls and is a pleasant alternative to Barbie and co. Just don't expect Michelle Kwan Figure Skating to be a comprehensive ice-skating simulation.

***Agata Budinska***




Before you ask, Agata hasn't scanned her face onto that skater (right).

# GAMEPLAY

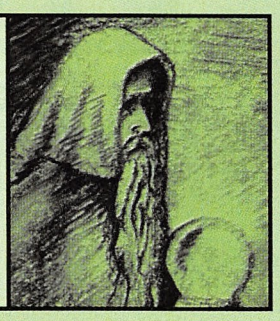
**HEADLINES:** Rogue Spear Playguide • Jagged Alliance 2 Tips • Madden 2000 Tips • Darkstone Tips

# THE ORACLE

All of the world's gamers combined can barely equal the merest fraction of the Oracle's infinite wisdom.

The Oracle is a Wisdom Dispensing Service. He cannot abide cheaters. Write to him at:

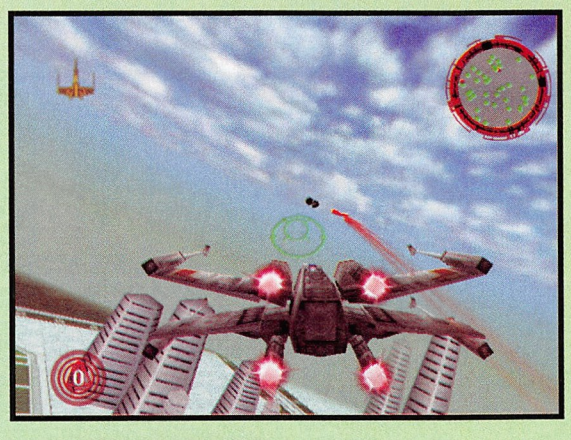
**Oracle**
**PC PowerPlay**
**Level 6 418a Elizabeth St.**
**Surry Hills, NSW 2010**
**oracle@pcpowerplay.next.com.au**



## CODE

**Unreal Tournament**
Call up the console (press tilde), type "**iamtheone**" and press **ENTER**. To enter the codes, press **TAB** and then type one of the following:
**ALLAMMO** - gives you 999 ammo for all your guns
**FLY** - lets you fly around
**WALK** - use this to stop flying or GHOSTING.
**GHOST** - noclip through walls
**KILLALL <enemy>** - kills all enemies of the class entered (nali, skaarjwarrior, mercenary, etc)
**PLAYERSONLY** - freezes time (enter again to resume time)
**GOD** - god mode
**OPEN <MAPNAME>** - jump to any map, just enter the name like OPEN DIG
**SUMMON itemname** - Adds whatever you want to the world (try CANNON, EIGHTBALL, FLAKCANNON, NALI, SKAARJWARRIOR, QUAD SHOT)
**BEHINDVIEW 1** - 3rd-person view
**BEHINDVIEW 0** - 1st-person view

**Braveheart**
In the 3D combat mode, press DEL to send an AI message, then type the following codes.
**Sesquipidilian** - AI Cheats Enabled ▶



## Rogue Squadron

**Q** Please tell me where to get the Power-up on Level 11: Battle above Taloraan. I need this to get a Gold Medal!

Thanks,

**Liam Hughes, Internet**

**A** Since you've asked so nicely. The bonus is located in the centre of the "platform in the clouds". And it isn't too hard to miss, actually. Tis surprising you haven't found it yet...

## Final Fantasy VII

**Q** After playing Final Fantasy 7 through a few times I have some strange items that apparently don't have any use. They are: 1/35th soldier, Dio's combat diaries, autograph, Masamune blade, super sweeper and tissue. Are these part of some secret in the game or are they just red herrings?. Also, is their any substance to the rumours of a hidden character?

**Robert Hollingsworth, Internet**

**A** Robert, all of the items found in Final Fantasy VII have some value - even though these values may be intangible ones. A direct answer to your question is that indeed yes, these items you've collected will not shape the course of your adventure in any significant way. Though each item does have a story behind it, as you've no doubt uncovered.

As for secret characters, there are a handful in the game. However, there are only two that'd you really want to join your party.

Yuffie Kisaragi:

You'll can find Yuffie on any of the discs, though she appears most often in the forests near the Gold Saucer and the area near Condor Fort. Your first meeting with her will be in battle. Beat her and you'll find her lying on the ground nearby. Approach her and work through various conversation strings to get her to join. Be careful though - take the wrong approach and she'll make off with a good chunk of your gils.

Vincent Valentine:

Ahh... a vampire. You'll need the gold key which can be found in the Shin-Ra Mansion in Nivelheim. This will open a door to a crypt nearby the cavern leading to Sephiroth's library. Simply use the purple coffin in this room and Valentine will talk to you. Again, if you choose your responses carefully enough he will soon join your party.

## Baldur's Gate

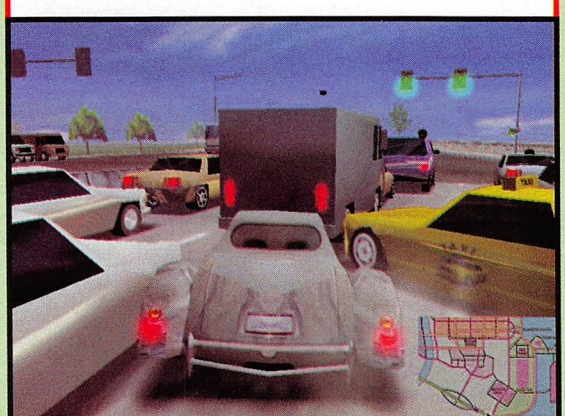
**Q** Please accept my humble offerings of caffeinated beverages and assorted junk food.

**READER'S TIP**

## tips&tactics

### MIDTOWN MADNESS

Have some fun with these cheats! When starting the game, use these command lines for these cheat modes:
**-allrace** - Get access to all races
**-allcars** - Get access to all cars
Example:
**C:\Midtown\midtown.exe -allcars -allrace**
**Steven D, Email**



**All cars = more traffic = jams like this**

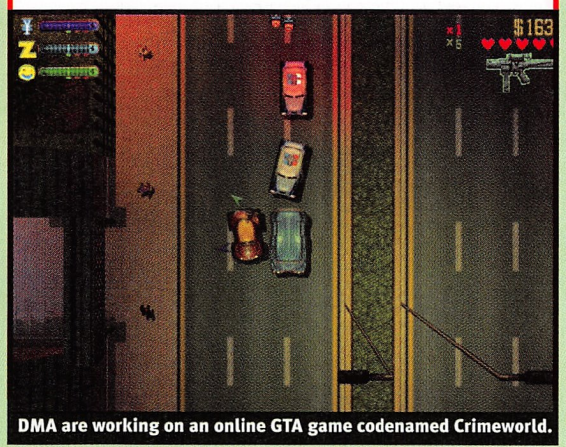
## tips&tactics

# GTA 2

• Harass the Yakuza's home town to get into the Loonies' good books.

• To earn the respect of the Zaibatsu, go and abuse the Loonies.

• To earn the respect of the Yakuza, The Zaibatsu Corporation could be taught the way of the fist.



DMA are working on an online GTA game codenamed Crimeworld.

I need your help in Baulder's Gate. I'm flat broke and don't know how to make cash quick. Can you please help with problem before I get kicked out of the "Friendly Arm Inn" for not paying my gigantic tavern tab.

**Vincent La, Email**

A Well, the first piece of advice is to not run up gigantic tavern tabs. Should you want to live the extravagant life, wait till you've actually managed to survive the Sword Coast for a while. Before then, be prepared to live a meagre existence. Of course, plain old adventuring and quest-solving is the only way you're going to manage to earn some gold in the early stages of the game. Traverse the lands and encourage encounters with all manner of creatures - preferably those carrying lots of gold. To save on healing potions, equip various party members with bows and arrows. This way, you'll make a fine mess of any opponents long before they make it to melee range.

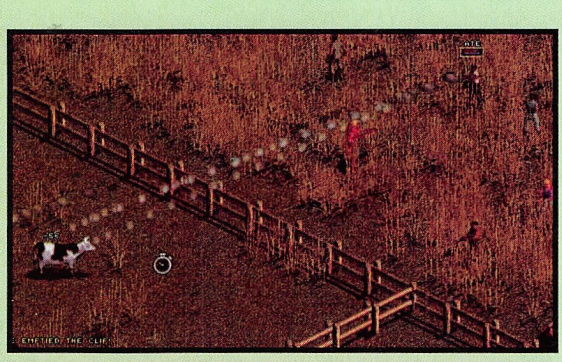
## Ultima Underworld II - Labyrinth of Worlds

Q I've played through most of this game, and I've yet to find any of the "secret spells" that are often harped on about. What are they? Where can I find them?

**Richard Daly, Newtown, NSW**

A If you you've "played through most of this game" and haven't found any of the secret spells then you are certainly in need of some assistance. Here, then, is a list of all the spells that aren't documented in the game manual. Some of these can be found on parchments in the game whilst others ▶



## tips&tactics

# JAGGED ALLIANCE 2

• Attacking at night is the best way to take well-defended sectors. Try to equip as many of your mercs as possible for night ops. Ideally, each night ops merc should be equipped with NV/UV Goggles, sound-enhancing headphones, a laser scope and several chem lights. Move your group in stealth mode, and then have them all go prone when they spot an enemy. He won't have seen them, so lob a chem light toward his position, then take him down with an un-silenced weapon. His colleagues will rush to his aid, blundering into the well-lit area and making easy targets of themselves. Snipers equipped with Dragunovs and Steyrs are particularly useful for this tactic.

• While saving is essential to survival, saving too often has an adverse effect. JA2 employs an "intelligent" saving system that reduces the quality of items found lying around and on the bodies of opponents when you save too often.

• Smoke grenades are extremely useful in many situations. The cover they provide is particularly effective when assaulting well-defended buildings or healing badly injured mercs in the heat of battle.

• Items that alone seem useless can be combined to form invaluable equipment. Take these examples:

**Empty Can and Fathom attached to door** = Alarm
**Spring and Aluminium Tube attached to gun** = Less action points
**Steel Tube and Tape and Glue attached to gun** = Longer range
**Compound 18 and Armour** = Stronger Armour
**Ceramic Plate and Vest** = Stronger Vest
**Slime from Bug Queen and Armour** = Stronger Armour
**TNT and Cyclonit** = HMX
**C1 and Cyclonit** = C4
**TNT and Platinum Watch and Tape** = TNT with timed fuse
**Lameboy and Copper Wire** = Display
**X-ray Tube and Fumblepack and Chewing Gum** = X-ray Device
**X-ray Device and Display** = X-ray Detector (Batteries needed for use)
**Marbles on the ground** = Enemies slip



# CODE

▶ **Bannockburn** - Kill All Enemies
**the five hundred** - Kill Your Own
**dresden** - All Buildings on Fire
**steve reeves** - All Troops Hard as Nails
**bucks fizz** - All Troops Retreated
**bastille day** - All Walls Breached
**haemorrhage** - Blood Disabled
**killcam** - Cameraman Dead

**Jagged Alliance 2**
On the Tactic screen, hold **CTRL** and type **IGUANA.** This activates the cheat mode. Now enter any of the following:
**ALT+E** - all units and items are shown
**ALT+T** - teleports currently selected mercenary to the cursor position
**ALT+O** - eliminates all enemies in the current sector
**ALT+D** - refreshes action points of the current selected mercenary
**ALT+R** - full ammo (reload weapon)
**ALT+W** - item scrolling, at first select an item in detail view
**ALT+B** - enemy appears at the cursor position
**ALT+G** - new mercenary appears at the cursor position
**ALT+2** - mercenary becomes bug
**ALT+4** - mercenary sits in a wheelchair
**ALT+5** - mercenary becomes big bug
**ALT+I** - a randomly generated weapon appears at the cursor position
**ALT+K** - gas grenade explodes at the cursor position
**ALT+Q** - show the inside of all buildings (the roofs disappears)
**ALT+1** - mercenary becomes a tank (not useable)
**CTRL+H** - the mercenary loses health points (cursor must be just at mercenary's position)
**CTRL+U** - heals the mercenary (cursor must be just at mercenary's position)
**CTRL+O** - an enemy bug appears ▶

# CODE

▶ **CTRL+K** - a hand grenade explodes at the cursor position

**Total Annihilation: Kingdoms**

Begin a Skirmish or multiplayer game then press Enter to display the message box, type in one of the following codes, and finally press Enter again to activate the cheat. Type in the code again and press Enter again to deactivate the cheat.

**+CLOCK** - in-game clock
**+LOTSABLOOD** - more blood
**+FOGCOLOR [1-256]** - alternate fog color
**+LOGO [1-9]** - alternate race color
**+LIGHTRANGE [1-20]** - change render lighting
**+BIGBROTHER** - CPU cycles through units
**+SELECTUNITS** - deselect selected units
**+F2MENU** - display menu
**+NAMEUNIT [UNIT]** - rename indicated unit
**+ROLLINGFOG** - toggle rolling fog effects
**+WACKYFOG** - toggle wavy fog effects
**+WACKYWATER** - toggle wavy water effects
**+VIDMODE** - change screen resolution
**+MAKEPOSTER** - screen shot
**+QUIT** - exit to Windows

**Starfleet Command**

When playing any mission, do an Alpha Strike (firing all weapons in a big burst) on the Aft Right Shield of an enemy ship but - and this is the important bit - do not destroy it completely. Resist your destructive urges for destroying the ship will mean the cheat will not work. Next, fire a Photon Torpedo into the Front Left Shield. Finally, press **Ctrl-F4** and you will receive 4,000 Prestige points.

**Lego Racers**

Type in the following as you driver name while editing your driver in build mode to obtain the special cars.

**FLYSKYHIGH** - Rocket Car
**NWHLS** - No Wheels Car



"Sorry, I don't have a toothpick. Will this do?"

are arrived at by using old-fashioned common sense.

**First Circle**

**Bouncing (Uus Des Por)**
Prevents caster from taking any damage from falls, and bounces the caster back up to their current level after taking a fall.

**Locate (Bet Wis Ex)**
Negates the effect of portals on the automap - where it ceases to work in certain locations. Cast this and the automap will continue to function in the proper manner.

**Second Circle**

**Dispel Hunger (Quas Mani Ylem)**
Causes the caster to instantly become well fed.

**Valor (Quas An Corp)**
Increases caster's combat statistics significantly. More specifically, a weapon skill is increased by 10, plus one per 5 points of casting skill.

**Third Circle**

**Repel Undead (Al Kal Corp)**
Causes Undead to flee from the caster. It affects one primary undead character and any other in the area whose hit points are not greater than ten times your casting skill.

**Fourth Circle**

**Frost (In An Flam)**
An area affect spell, Frost will inflict ten points of damage to every creature in the immediate area.

**Thick Skin (In Sanct)**
This spell increases resistance to damage, more so than Resist Blows (first circle) but less than Iron Flesh (eight circle).

**Fifth Circle**

**Rune of Stasis (In Tym Jux)**
A floating rune that paralyses the first creature to touch it. Lasts until disturbed.

**Mending (Rel Sanct Ylem)**
When cast on a weapon, armour, light source, food or a door, this spell brings it to top quality.

**Sixth Circle**

**Map Area (Wis Ex)**
This spell reveals an area around the caster to the automap. Radius varies from 15-165 feet, depending on the caster's casting skill level.

**Seventh Circle**

**Enchantment (Vas Ort Ylem)**
This spell can be used to add charges to a weapon or object that has magical charges, or can be used to permanently enchant a weapon or armour.

**Eight Circle**

**Smite Foe (Vas Jux Mani)**
A more powerful version of the third circle "bleeding" spell. It causes a creature (which is able to bleed, of course) to take 110 points of damage, plus 3 points per level of caster's casting skill. A mighty spell, only a few creatures are strong enough to withstand the effects of Smite Foe.

**Armageddon (Vas Kal Corp)**
This spell kills all creatures, destroys all objects, doors, stairways and bridges, as well as having other strange effects in the realms of Ultima Underworld II. Not recommended.

## tips&tactics

# DARKSTONE

• The most effective spell for early level magic-users is the Magic Bomb. Essentially, it's a grenade that you can lob onto the head of any hapless enemy, even from around a corner or through a wall. It's impossible to resist and results in a splendid 30 to 70 points of damage each time.

• Spike traps and mines often block the way to loads of cool treasure or useful items, meaning hit points must be sacrificed to collect the booty. A better solution however is to use either a scroll of Telekinesis or a scroll of Teleport. The cost in gold is more than compensated by what you save in health.



Playing Darkstone is a real killer for your calf muscles.

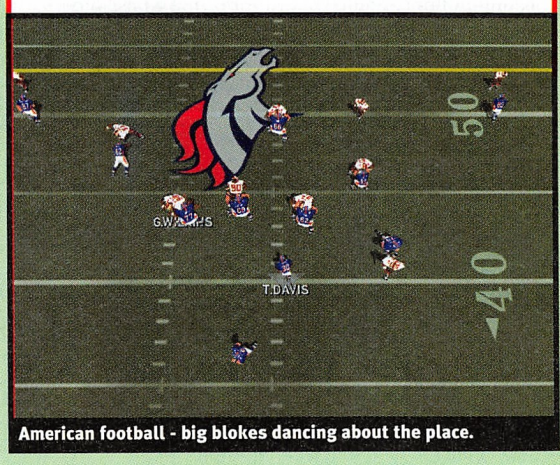
## tips&tactics

# EA SPORTS MADDEN 2000

• Spend some time on the practice field perfecting your playbook. This way, you'll be familiar with what each individual player will be doing in each play. Obviously, start learning only a handful of plays, and slowly increase this number as you become more proficient with these. The difference this will make on the field is twofold. You will gain more yardage and more importantly - the game will feel so much more authentic.

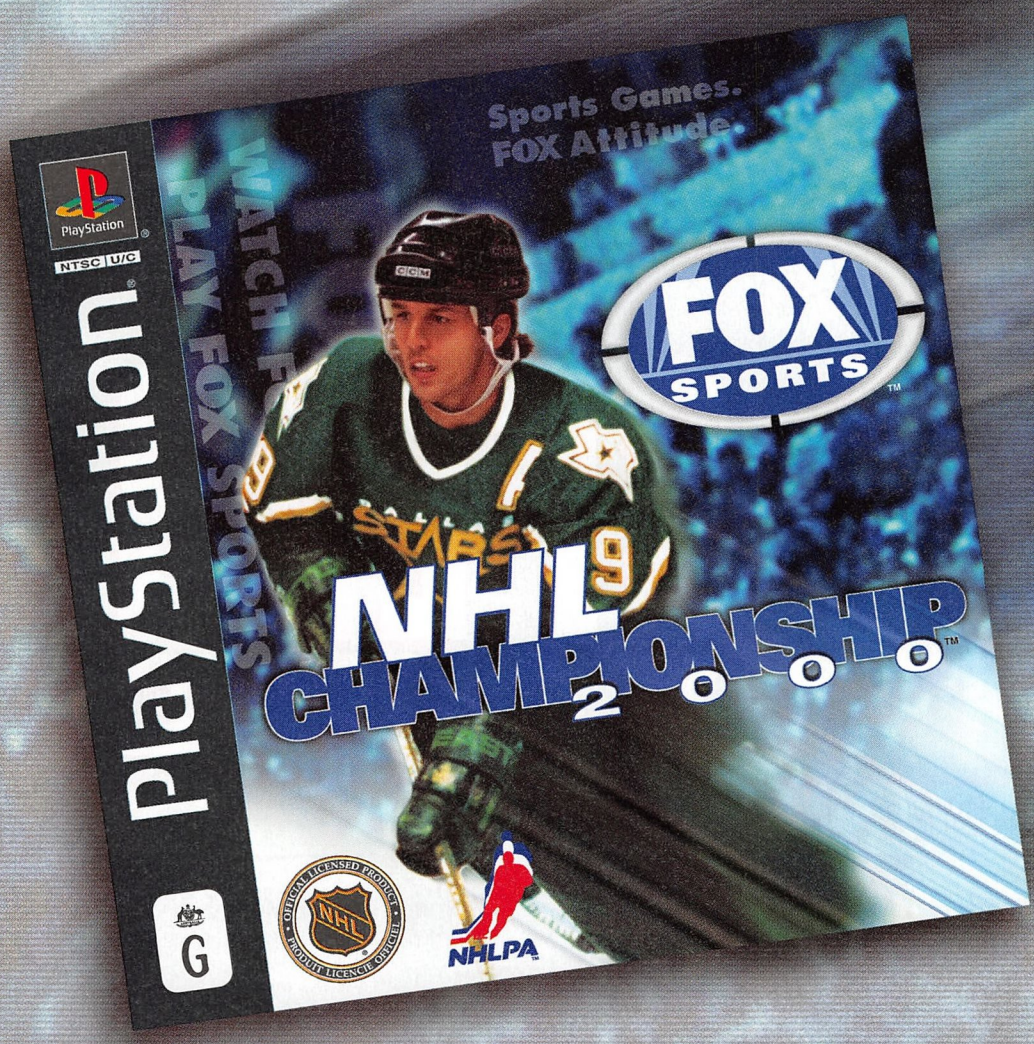
• This time around, the passing game is far less forgiving, with interceptions aplenty. Balancing this is a much stronger running game, so you should find much greater success in running the ball up to the end zone.

• Has you quarter back been throwing one too many interceptions? Put him on the bench! The same goes with any other player that's been performing poorly. Substitutions do tend to have a positive effect on your game so chop and change often. Just watch those skill levels!



American football - big blokes dancing about the place.

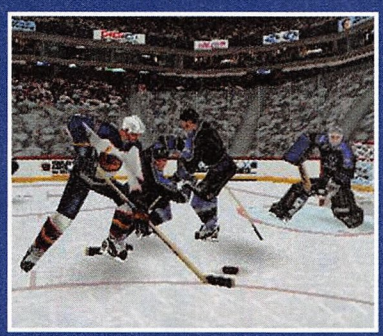
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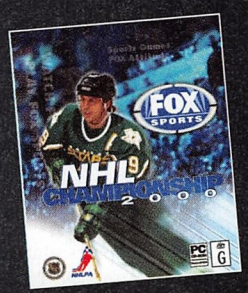

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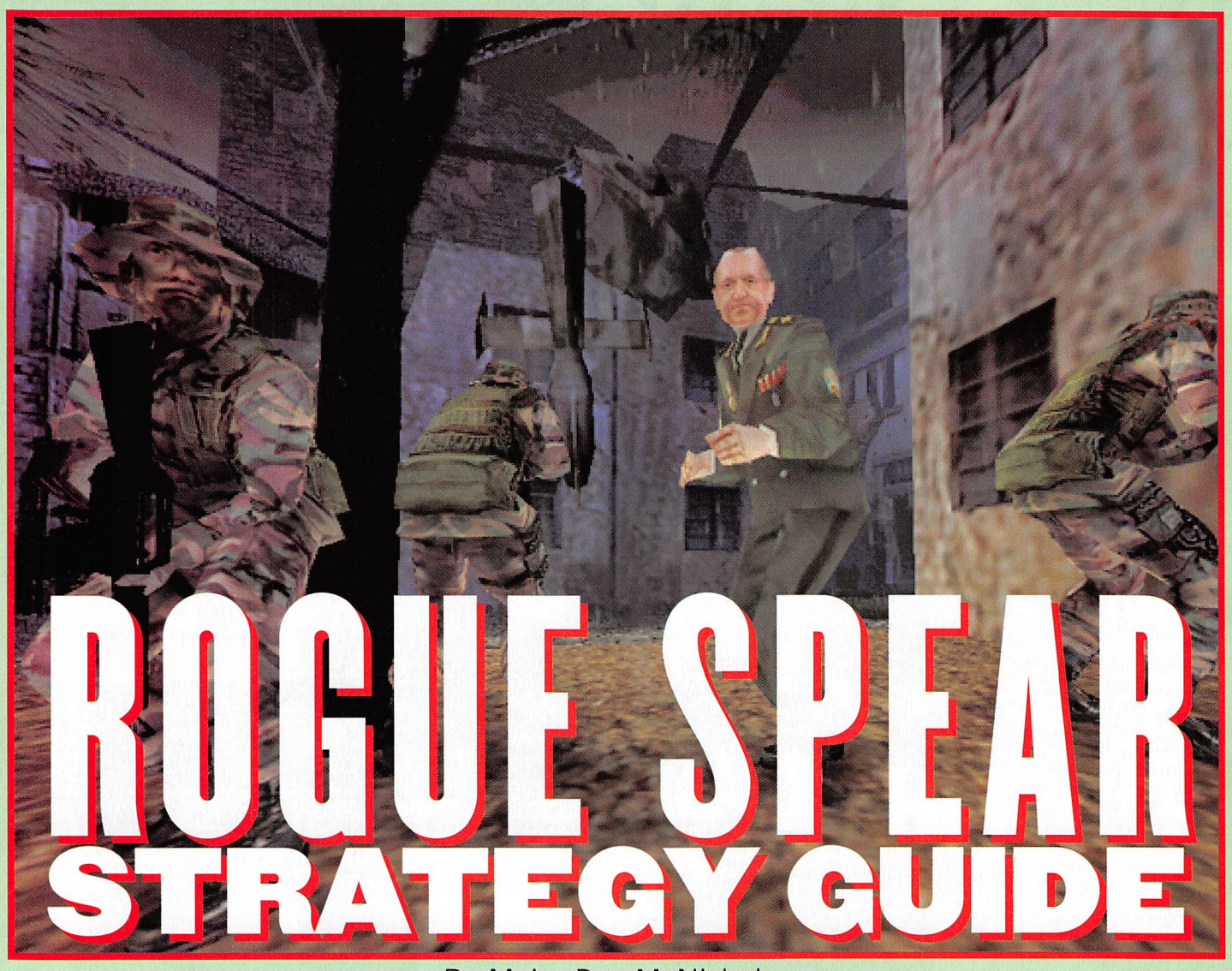
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PETT 992865



# ROGUE SPEAR STRATEGY GUIDE

By Major Des McNicholas

Rogue Spear is the most exiting thing to hit the PC since, well, Rainbow Six. As the worthy successor to ground-breaking original, it manages to strike the perfect balance between FPS and strategic gameplay. It offers both lightning fast action and the opportunity to use your brain. No matter how quick you are on the draw, the real challenge and satisfaction in Rogue Spear is found in planning a course of action, allocating resources, and then co-ordinating a number of personnel or teams in the execution of your brilliant plan. The aim of this strategy guide is to arm you with some useful advice to get you started along that road to paradise. It's heavily weighted towards the planning phase, because that's where most missions are won or lost.

## THE PLANNING PHASE

*"Time spent in reconnaissance is seldom wasted"*

This old military adage essentially means that if you get the preparation right, the execution will pretty much take care of itself. Surprises are unlikely, and if they do happen, your plan will be robust enough to withstand the shock. So stick with the game's suggested plans for the first couple of missions, and monitor the whole thing in 'Watch Mode' to see how it all comes together and, more importantly, where it falls apart. Then replay the missions using your own plans - the earlier you take over, the sooner you'll realise how well your money was spent. Grandma will just have to wait for that new hip!




Mission Briefing

### The Mission Briefing

Avoid the desire to skip over the mission briefing, particularly as a new player. Listen to everything, and check out all of the information presented. Click on the advisors for any last minute tips, and spend some time at the Intel Screen. As the game progresses, you'll find the briefing more and more useful, as it gives you clues about likely Tango courses of action, and provides



**Choosing your team**

advice on the best way to structure your team and execute the mission. If you fail a mission, listen to the briefing again - you'll often find something you missed first time around. At a minimum, you must leave the briefing knowing the nature of the objectives, any limitations on the aim (such as time or the need for covert action), and likely Tango intentions.

### Choosing Your Team

Having been studiously attentive during the Mission Briefing, you should already have a feel for the skill sets you're going to need to complete the mission. In most cases, assault skills are the most important within a team, although some missions call for specialists in demolitions, electronics, reconnaissance or sniping. Bear in mind that all team members are capable of carrying out each of those tasks to a higher or lesser degree, but the use of a mission specialist will speed up the process or ensure greater accuracy. Like many aspects of Special Forces operations, it's a trade-off. If heavy fighting is likely and covert action isn't required, it's wise to rely on assault specialists who are better able to fight their way into and out of the mission area. When the mission calls for covert operations such as the theft of computer files or assassination, use another specialist. The one exception is probably the team sniper - if you need one of those, always go for a specialist.

## OPERATION PANDORA TRIGGER

An excellent first mission is probably one of the reasons that Rogue Spear has grabbed so many fans.

- Go with three teams of two. Send two teams in the front door and one in the back.
- Hold the front door assault until the rear team has made some headway. Make use of the heartbeat sensor to pick the right time to go in the back door - plenty of easy pickings there.
- The front teams need to be on assault mode at first. Watch out for Tangos on the balconies.
- Avoid the open spaces and use the side rooms wherever possible.
- Assault the hostage room from both sides, with all teams using flashbangs.
- This is a great mission to replay again and again as you try out just about everything.




Take your time choosing the team. Rogue Spear offers a terrific range of options and your aim is to get a balanced mix of the skill sets needed for the mission. You'll be splitting them into two or three fire teams shortly and you need to ensure that any one team is capable of seeing the job through if the sky falls in on your plan. In each skill category, the higher the rating score the better, and you should lean towards

## WHAT DID YOU DO IN THE WAR, DADDY? - SPECIALIST SKILLS

### ASSAULT

Assault specialists are the heart and soul of most missions. He or she will target the enemy more quickly than other specialists, and has a better chance of 'one shot, one kill' in pressure situations. But keep them under control, as you won't always want to shoot first and ask questions later. See the section on Rules of Engagement for more info.

### DEMOLITIONS

Some missions call for demolition skills. A demolition specialist will handle those jobs quickly, but it's at the expense of some fighting expertise. As a general rule, use assault specialists to place breaching charges or explosives, and only recruit a demolition expert if the mission involves disarming a bomb. The manual says you should try to protect them by placing them in the middle of your team, but it's all bit too hard.



**Heavy Protection - "Restricts movement but a must for anything that involves being blown up!"**

### ELECTRONICS

Some of the more interesting missions involve bugging meetings, computer theft, or defeating security alarms. Once again, an electronics expert will be faster, but I think you should just stick with an assault specialist with a high electronics rating. Most of those missions are covert, and time isn't as important as not getting detected.

### SNIPER

Snipers are needed for assassination or to provide top-cover in hostage rescue situations. Often they will 'open the door' for a fire team by taking out a well positioned Tango (the 747 mission is a great example of that). Given that sniper skills are almost always mission critical, and that a missed shot will give away the whole show, my advice is to use a specialist whenever a sniper is needed. I tend to include one in every outdoor mission, regardless of the objectives.

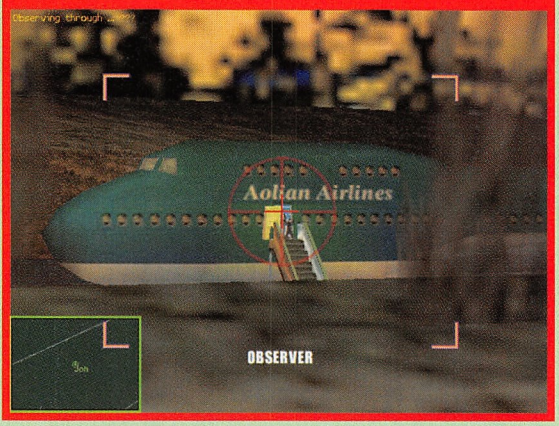


**Recon Garb - "Good for checking out the enemy and stylish enough for the party afterwards."**

## OPERATION PERFECT SWORD

This is the mission everyone was waiting for, and it lives up to expectations! For my money, Perfect Sword is the pick of the bunch, particularly at the higher difficulty settings.

- You'll need two to three assault teams plus a Sniper.
- Position the Sniper on the high ground overlooking the front of the aircraft. The route in is covered all the way.
- Use the truck to shield the movement of your assault teams to the rear cargo door.
- Quickly take out any Tangos on the cargo deck, and split the teams between the rear and forward stairs.
- Use heartbeat sensors to pick the time when the Tangos are at the farthest point from your teams.
- Co-ordinate the final assault with the Sniper taking out the Tango on the entry stairs - if the sniper fires too soon you'll give the game away.






Choosing kit



The Planning Screen: Feeling kind of flat...

...check it out in glorious 3D!

assault and stealth where possible. When picking character profiles, put on your psychologist's hat and look for leadership and self-control, particularly where team leaders are concerned. And don't forget to check the Readiness State for each operative - it will change from mission to mission, and you want to avoid using fatigued and wounded personnel if you can.

### Never Blame Your Tools - Choosing Kit

Selecting the appropriate kit for your team is one of the more enjoyable aspects of Rogue Spear. You'll quickly identify the broad range of items that best fit your playing style, and most missions will just call for some minor tweaking to suit specific objectives. The quickest way to get on top of kit selection is to use the default suggestions as you try out the first couple of missions, and look for anything that might have made a difference. Would a silenced weapon have given you more time? Would flashbangs have been better than frag grenades? (The hostages seem to think so!) And what about bino's or a heartbeat sensor?

For each team member you can specify the type of uniform, body armour, primary and secondary weapons, and special equipment. You have the option of assigning the current kit to all operatives, but that will limit the range of items available for the mission. It's far more sensible to create a number of good kit layouts, and then save them so that you can use them again in later missions. The sample kits provided in the manual for each specialist are a good guide for kit selection, as they match the kit to the task at hand. There's no point in giving your sniper heavy body armour as it will slow him or her down and make it very difficult to get a good firing position. Conversely, if an operative is going to be

## WHAT THE WELL-DRESSED TRAINED KILLER IS WEARING THIS SUMMER - SOME USEFUL KIT

### WEAPONS

- Try them all, but to start out you can't go past the HK MP5SD5 or the MP510SD. The SD5 has a better silencer and is more accurate at the cost of slightly less penetration, whereas the 10SD will chop through light body armour with ease. The key point in most missions is to go for a silencer.
- If the briefing warns about body armour, then take a step up to the HK UMP45SD. The sound suppression is not as effective, but nothing's going to walk away.
- When finesse and silence aren't called for, equip the lead member of your team with the Benelli M1 shotgun. It's great for knocking on doors and clearing out rooms - also an interesting choice in Lone Wolf Mode.
- If you need to draw your secondary weapon, discretion is probably no longer the better part of valour - go for the .50 Desert Eagle. Limited ammo, but plenty of punch. Alternatively, anything that comes equipped with a white flag should do the trick!

### EQUIPMENT

While the equipment mix you settle on will be determined by the mission, some items of kit are useful regardless of the objectives.

- If the action is outdoors, always take bino's along to check out Tango movements and look for safe approaches. At 8x zoom they make a hell of a difference.
- Flashbangs are a Tango Terminators best friend, particularly when hostages are involved. Always sprinkle them generously among your teams, and present them at the door instead of your card! Safer and often more effective than grenades, flashbangs give you the time needed to discriminate between hostiles and friendlies. Don't forget to look away!
- Finally, take a heartbeat sensor along whenever they're on offer. One per fire team is the way to go. Remember to scan from side to side, as the front cone is fairly narrow, and be prepared to grab your weapon again at short notice.



"No you can't have it. We've only got one left and someone might need it."






March tries Pandora Trigger for the 87th time - if only he'd read this stuff when he edits it!

standing in the open laying charges, then some armour might be a nice thought.

### The Planning Screen

After the initial excitement of charging into a room and killing everything in sight wears off, you'll come to appreciate the planning function in Rogue Spear. For me, it's the heart of the game, and the thing that places it a cut above the opposition. As we mentioned in the review a while back, it's possible to crash through most of the missions FPS style, but you're avoiding the real challenge of co-ordinating the efforts of other fire teams. Once you've allocated your operatives to their teams, take some time to examine the Planning Screen in detail.

The Recon display presents all available intelligence on the mission at hand. Click through each of the headings to identify the known or estimated locations of hostages, terrorists and key landmarks. In particular, you need to identify primary hostages (green), key objectives (yellow) and the extraction zone (white). You should already be getting a feel for the most likely approaches available to you, as well as the areas of highest risk.

Plotting movement and assigning actions is fairly straightforward, although mastering the use of Go Codes can be a challenge at first. It's worth the effort, because Special Forces operations are all about simultaneity, and Go Codes let you achieve it. Before planning the routes for your teams, switch to the 3D-map view by clicking the right hand button. This view gives you a good feel for the environment, and will help you identify covered approaches and likely Tango ambush points. Return to the normal view, select the Orders tab, and place waypoints for each of your teams. For each waypoint, think carefully about the Rules of Engagement (ROE) and any special actions required. Use Go Codes for anything that needs to be co-ordinated with another team, such as bursting into a room from both sides.

## OPERATION TEMPLE GATE

A good mission for the more cultured amongst us, set in the Prague Opera House. This is a tough mission, in an environment full of narrow stairways and wide killing zones. Pay particular attention to the Tango locations shown in the briefing.

- Go for two to three assault teams, all with silencers.
- Default mission kit is fine, but don't use the plan.
- Send a team in the back way, working their way through from top to bottom.
- Use the same team to take out any Tangos behind the front doors, and then send the other teams in.
- Avoid all open areas and main thoroughfares.
- Use heartbeat sensors extensively and peak at every turn.
- Watch for hostages going to the toilet - their escorts are easy pickings.
- Check out the balconies before a final Go Code assault on the stage.




## THE ACTION PHASE

*No plan survives contact with the enemy*

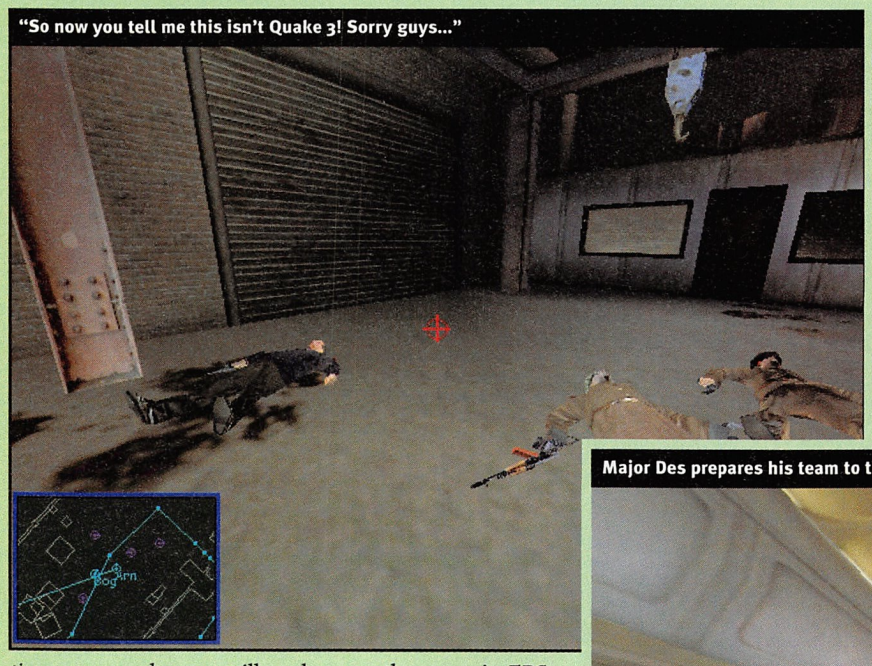
Remember when I said that the execution would take care of itself if you got the planning right? The fact is something will almost always go wrong, and success or failure will be determined by how well you react to changing circumstances. The following gratuitous advice should be of help in most missions:

- **Stick to the plan.** Avoid the temptation to change everything at the first setback. This is a dangerous business, and you should have factored in the possibility of casualties. When you're in command of a team, use the mission map to follow your waypoints as planned, rather than spearing off in other directions. If you suddenly find an unexpected hole in the Tango's defences, make sure your actions still tie in with the efforts of the other fire teams. Naturally, if the plan's obviously broke, fix it.
- **Take your time.** The




...and after Peek shot again! Always Peek!




"So now you tell me this isn't Quake 3! Sorry guys..."




Major Des prepares his team to try to obtain a first class seat.

times you need to run will be obvious - sprinting for cover, for example, or closing quickly on the objective. In most cases you should walk between waypoints in order to reduce noise, increase firing accuracy, and maintain your situational awareness.

• ***Always* peek.** The introduction of the peek view adds a whole new dimension to Rogue Spear that's bound to become the norm in FPS games. Like a smile, peeking costs nothing and it might just save the mission for you. Remember that Tango locations can change each time you attempt a mission, so don't assume that an area that was safe last time you went through will still be OK next time around.

• **Monitor all fire teams.** Check the mission map regularly to ensure

## GETTING IT TOGETHER - RULES OF ENGAGEMENT, GO CODES AND SPECIAL ACTIONS

### GO CODES

The manual describes Go Codes as 'stoplights' and that's a good way to think of them. If one is assigned to a waypoint, the designated team will wait for the Go Code (green light) before carrying out the specified action. By designating Go Codes to a number of teams, you can co-ordinate their efforts with the tap of a button.

The trick is to use as few Go Codes as possible, and ideally you should use the same Go Code for all teams at any given time. The meaning might be different - for example Go Code Alpha might tell one team to provide sniper cover while another assaults a position at the same time, but both act on the one keystroke. Use the in-game map to keep track of all teams, wait until they're in position, and let rip with a Go Code. In some of the more complex missions it's worth writing the Go Codes down.

### RULES OF ENGAGEMENT (ROE)

As you set waypoints for your teams, you must also determine the ROE you wish them to follow as they move up to and through them. ROE specify what teams will do and the speed with which they will act. When used in conjunction with Go Codes, ROE offer an extremely powerful way for you to co-ordinate and monitor the actions of a number of teams. Each team can operate in one of four modes: Assault; Infiltrate; Recon or Escort.

The Infiltrate and Recon modes are probably the most useful, so you should try to master them as quickly as possible. Use Infiltrate whenever you are trying to achieve simultaneity between a number of teams. Your fire teams will move quickly and quietly to their waypoints, avoiding Tangos whenever they can. Teams in Recon mode will be slower still, but it's an ideal ROE when you're uncertain of Tango locations. Follow them up with Assault teams.

### SPECIAL ACTIONS

The assignment of special actions at critical waypoints is the final step in laying out your plan. While many waypoints are simply route markers, others will involve some form of action, such as breaching doors and the use of flashbangs or grenades. Depending on your plan, you may also want teams to remain in location to provide covering fire, defend a position, or establish a sniping post.

Co-ordination is again effected through the use of Go Codes, and you need to monitor the mission map throughout the mission to ensure that teams remain in sync with each other. The best way to practice special actions is to try out new plans for successfully completed missions. Alternatively, use the default plan and jump into Watch Mode to see what it all means.



Go Codes bring it all together at the right place and time.

How the postmen have to dress in rough neighbourhoods.



## OPERATION DIAMOND GATE

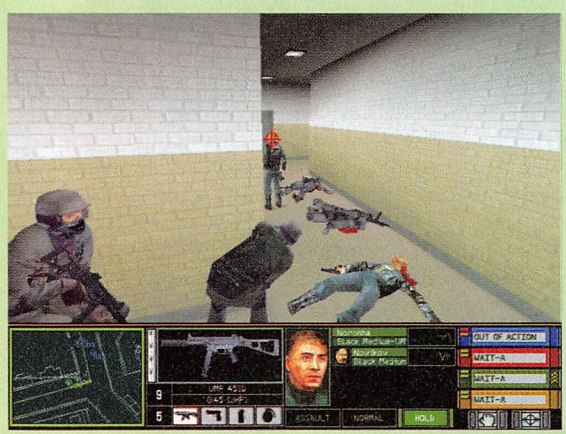
An interesting mission, in which you must extract a Colonel who's not too keen on the idea.

- Two teams of two or three operatives is enough. You may want a single operative to pave the way.
- Use a lockpick kit to gain entry, and be ready for a quick response from the enemy.
- Watch out for the tower guards and send a team down each tunnel.
- Use one team to cover the other (defend mode) as it makes the assault. Grenades are good here.
- Watch Rudenko, as he'll try to run away, and have one team escort him to the extraction zone.



that all teams are following the plan. Stationary teams have either hit trouble or they're waiting for a Go Code. You can jump into each team or toggle Watch Mode to assess the situation yourself, but I recommend you keep team-hopping to a minimum as disorientation can set in quickly. Naturally, taking over another team may be appropriate if some form of special action is imminent.

• **Listen to your heart!** Give each fire team a Heartbeat Sensor if you can and check it regularly. Avoid assigning them to the team leaders, so that you'll always have access to the data and your weapon if you take control of the team. Remember that teams with a Recon ROE will have the Heartbeat Sensor out at all times, thereby reducing the available firepower.



• **Use Snipers.** I mentioned earlier that I'm a big Sniper fan. Correctly positioned, an individual Sniper can cover entrances, exits, or vulnerable locations. Generally, Snipers can be safely deployed alone. Use Go Codes or the sniper toggle to control them, as unscripted assassinations can give the game away.

• **Get some personal space.** You're team will stick to you like glue, which can sometimes lead to your coming unstuck! Use the hold key to allow you to scout ahead alone before calling the rest of the team forward. And don't forget that if you switch teams for a quick check on progress, your original team will continue on to their designated waypoint - put them on hold if that's a problem.

• **Change the rules.** You can alter the ROE during a mission. If the plan starts to fall apart, or the situation has drastically changed, then modify the ROE accordingly.

• **Avoid long bursts of fire.** Single shots or very short bursts are the most effective, and they're less likely to attract attention.

• **Escort to safety.** Hostages will follow any team set to Escort mode. It can be a problem at times, particularly when there's more fighting to be done. If you need to lose them for a while, take them to a safe area and then change your team's mode. They should stay put until you come back to collect the reward!

"I think I'll just escort this fence to safety."





## CHEATS FOR SAD LOSERS

**teamshadow** - invisibility
**silentbutdeadly** - an old favourite!
**5fingerdiscount** - resup ammo and equipment
**avatargod** - you're invincible
**teamgod** - the team's invincible

# TECHNEWS

Silicon State Of The Art. By Hugh Norton-Smith

Intel Solano • Celeron II • AMD Athlon 750 • Rage Fury Maxx • Logitech Force Feedback Mouse • 1GHz Machine Neon 250 PCI

# 1GHz SUPERCOMPUTING



The 2GHz AMD will come with bar fridge attached. Wonderful!

The gigahertz mark has always been something of a pipe dream for gamers. For us, 500, 600, 733 and 800MHz are all arbitrary milestones. However, the elusive gigahertz mark is a historical achievement. The result of a long collaboration between Kryotech and AMD, the 1GHz SuperG system achieves its speed through 'phase-change' cooling. Essentially, the Kryotech rig freezes the AMD 550MHz Athlon processor to sub-zero temperatures. By supercooling your processor, you can attain otherwise impossible speeds.

If you're prepared to import from the US and put up with a system that sounds like a fighter plane taking off, a bare-bone SuperG system sans monitor costs a whopping $2450 US. Naturally, this does not include import taxes.

## AMD Athlon 750

In similar news, AMD have regained the performance crown with the release of their flagship Athlon processor at 750MHz. The introduction has signalled a large price reduction in the rest of the Athlon range, and a knee-jerk price cut in the Intel Pentium III line up. Intel's failure to release a working version of the i820 'Camino' motherboard chipset, compounded with their low yields of Pentium III 'Coppermine' CPUs has allowed AMD to take a large chunk of the high-end market. Compaq, Gateway and Fujitsu-Siemens have introduced systems based around the Athlon.

## Intel Issues

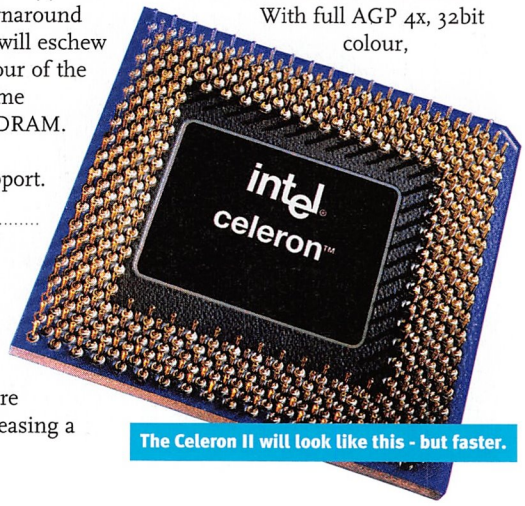
The Intel i815, or Solano, is expected to be released in January as a successor to the venerable 440BX chipset. In a dramatic turnaround for Chipzilla, the Solano will eschew RAMBUS support in favour of the much cheaper and, in some instances, faster PC133 SDRAM. It will also include native ATA/66 and AGP 4x support.

## Supercharged Celerons

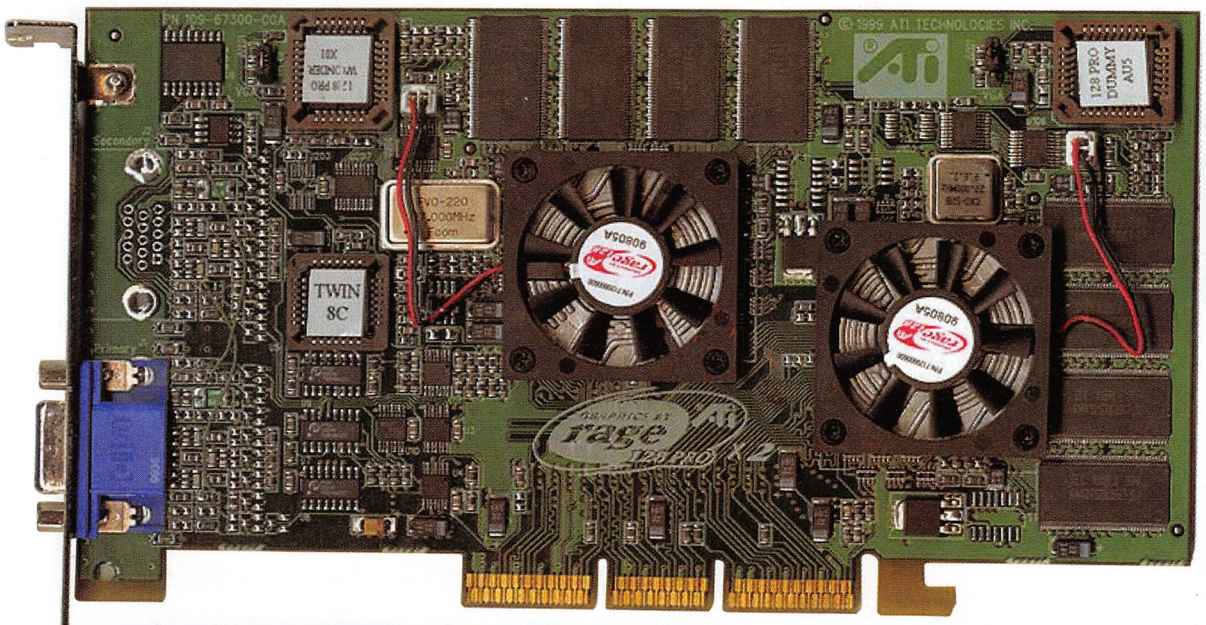
Intel's Celeron processor has always appealed to the cost conscious and the hardcore overclockers. Intel are releasing a 533MHz chip in January, with a .18 micron version of the same chip to follow in March. Dubbed the Celeron II, the .18 version of the Celeron will feature SSE optimisations. Formerly reserved for Pentium III processors, SSE is a set of extended architecture improvements that allow for much faster graphics. A 566MHz Celeron will appear in March, with a 600 in mid winter, and finally a 633MHz variant in late spring 2000.

## Rage Fury Maxx

ATI, the largest manufacturer of video cards on the planet, has just announced the Rage Fury Maxx. Previously known as the Aurora, the Rage Fury Maxx incorporates two Rage Fury 128 processors on the single graphics card. Effectively, this should double the fill rate of the videocard with no visual errors. With full AGP 4x, 32bit colour,



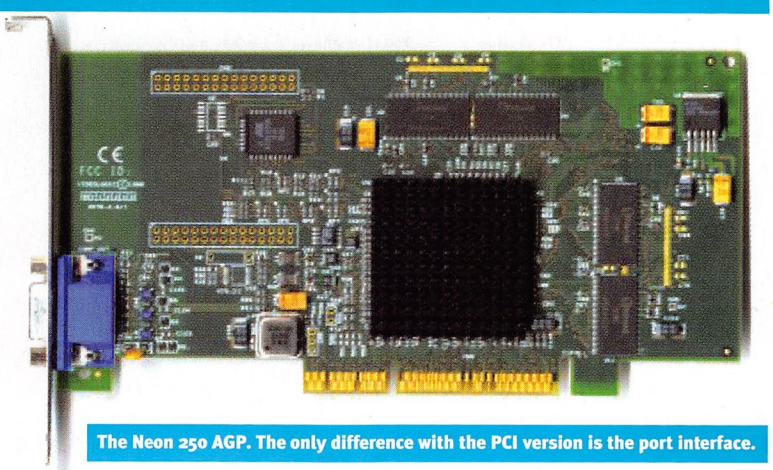

The Celeron II will look like this - but faster.




ATI's RageFury Maxx.

integrated DVD hardware support and a whopping 64MB of RAM, the Maxx looks set to give the nVidia Geforce a run for its money.

It doesn't stop there, though. ATI are in development of the mysterious Rage '6' chipset. The Rage 6 will include an on-board geometry engine with full transform and lighting, vertex blending and large fill rates. Naturally it will come with DVD motion compensation and full HDTV support. It is rumoured that a modified version of the Rage 6 will be built-into the Microsoft 'X-Box' console.



The Neon 250 AGP. The only difference with the PCI version is the port interface.

## Neon 250 PCI

Imagination Technologies have released a PCI compliant version of their Neon 250 video card. The demand for PCI accelerators remains considerable but many vendors have ignored this important upgrade market in favour of AGP products. Reviewed several issues back, the Neon250 features the NEC PowerVR 250 graphics processor, an integrated 250 MHz RAMDAC and 32 MB of SDRAM. While this might appeal to users of 'old-school' motherboards, it will incur a large performance penalty, particularly when dealing with frequent memory hits.

## ABIT Videocards

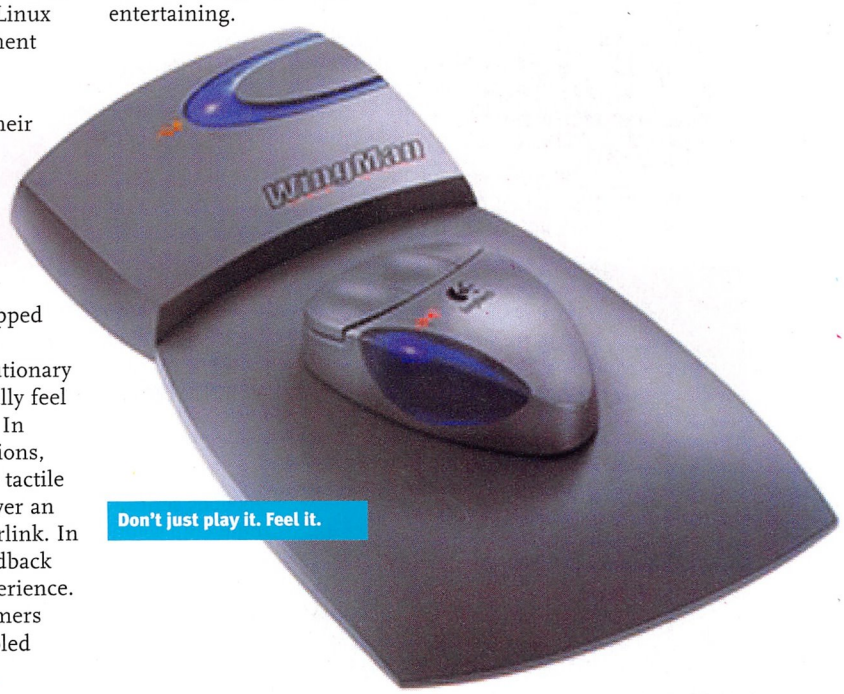
Taiwanese motherboard manufacturer, Abit, are expanding their product lines - having just announced a range of videocards based on nVidia's chipsets. Both TNT2 and Geforce products are in the works. Hopefully they will come with the sort of overclocking tools we have come to expect from Abit!

## nVidia ICD for Linux!

At Comdex, word was that Linux plans to release a full OpenGL ICD for Linux. Up until now, nVidia cards have always had patchy Linux support: Certainly, the Voodoo3 has always been the only option for the serious Linux gamer. With Linux versions of Unreal Tournament and Quake3 in stores now, manufacturers are under increasing pressure to get their hardware 'Tux-certified'. Good news indeed.

## Force Feedback Mouse Ships

Logitech have finally shipped their hotly anticipated force feedback mouse! The revolutionary design allows users to actually feel the games they are playing. In addition to gaming applications, developers can now provide tactile feedback as a user moves over an icon, button, menu or hyperlink. In a similar manner, force feedback can enhance the online experience. For example, web-based gamers playing force feedback-enabled games will be able to feel the impact of actions taken by an opponent sitting thousands of miles away, while Web developers can add touch sensations to their pages. Should make one handed web browsing even more entertaining.

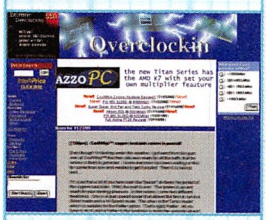



Don't just play it. Feel it.

## TECH NEWS HOTSITES




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HOTWARE NEWS

# 3DFX BITES BACK WITH VOODOO 4/5

The release of the Voodoo graphics chipset - subsequently incorporated by Diamond, Orchid and many others - practically revolutionised gaming in mid-1997. With the complete lack of competition, it was the only option for the hardcore gamer. The release of the Voodoo2 furthered 3dfx's dominance of the performance 3D accelerator market. Even today, if you are prepared to disregard 32-bit colour, the Voodoo2 remains a very competent accelerator. The subsequent Voodoo3 was a knee jerk reaction to the nVidia TNT's surprising performance. Although it was quite fast, the Voodoo3 wasn't the most exciting product: essentially it was a rehash of the Voodoo2 core with an additional 2D engine. Disappointingly, the much-maligned Voodoo3 retained the same architectural limitations of the comparatively antiquated Voodoo2 design - the weakest part of Voodoo technology has always been the lack of 32-bit colour rendering, the 256x256 texture limitations, and the limited 16MB headroom. Recently, and much to 3dfx's chagrin, nVidia's GeForce and TNT2 have begun to eclipse the Voodoo series. Dedicated gamers seem to be more interested in features rather than brute power. With the advent of nVidia's all-conquering GeForce, 3dfx's plan seems clear: produce the fastest card at all costs.

## Voodoo magic

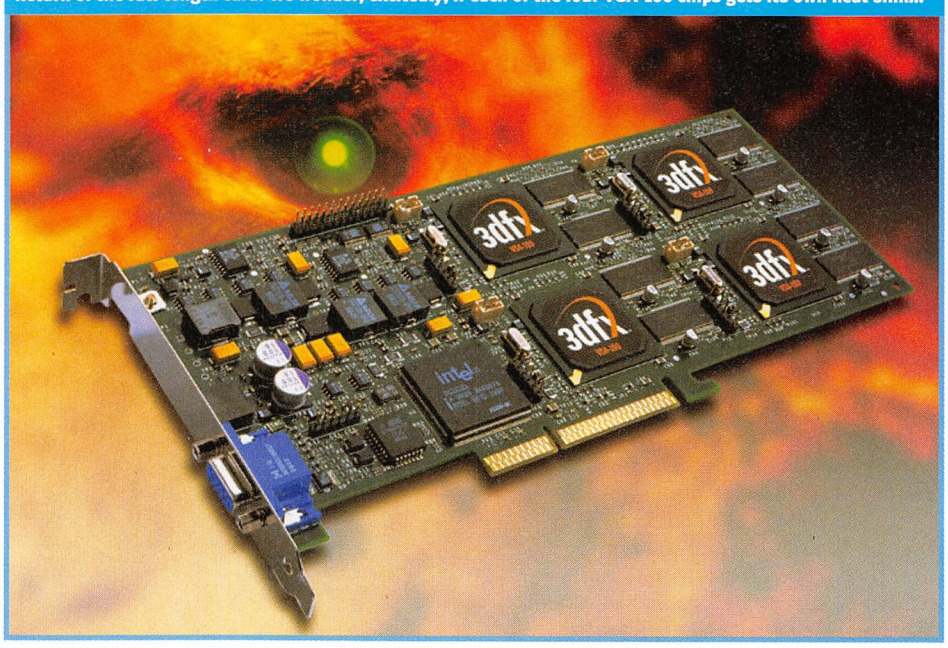
Previously known as 'Napalm', the Voodoo4 and 5 have impressive specifications; despite the lack of hardware T&L. 3dfx will release 5 different models in quick succession. They are slated for an early 2000 release. Although they differ in performance and features, they all contain the same fundamental core design:

**Voodoo 5 6000 AGP**
128MB Graphics Memory
1.33 - 1.47 Gigapixels per second
32-bit colour rendering
T-Buffer Digital Cinematic Effects




VSA-100. That's "Voodoo scaleable architecture".

Return of the full-length card! We wonder, excitedly, if each of the four VGA-100 chips gets its own heat sink...




**Voodoo 5 5500 AGP**
64MB Graphics Memory
667-733 Megapixels per second
32-bit colour rendering
T-Buffer Digital Cinematic Effects

**Voodoo 5 5000 PCI**
32MB Graphics Memory
667-733 Megapixels per second
32-bit colour rendering
T-Buffer Digital Cinematic Effects

## Real cost

The performance of the Voodoo4/5 is only matched by the exorbitant price. The Voodoo4 4500 AGP/PCI will cost approximately US$179.99 dollars, which is the same current price as the Voodoo3 3000. The Voodoo5 5000 PCI will cost approximately US$229.99. The Voodoo5 5500 AGP will cost approximately US$299.99, which is equivalent to the nVidia GeForce. The flagship Voodoo5 6000 will cost a staggering US$599.99. This will translate to an Australian launch price in excess of AUS $1,000, which is more than half what many people would pay for a complete system.

## ONE BILLION PIXELS PER SECOND

**Voodoo 4 4500 AGP and 4500 PCI**
32MB Graphics Memory
337-367 Megapixels per second
32-bit colour rendering

The Voodoo4 will be available in both AGP and PCI single-chip flavours, while the Voodoo5 series will comprise the company's multi-chip solutions. The Voodoo4 will be aimed at the budget market, whereas the Voodoo5 is clearly intended for the hardcore gamers or graphics designers.

## 1 billion pixels per second!

The Voodoo5 6000 is the product that will deliver 3dfx's claim of greater than 1 billion pixels per second fill rate. Make no mistake, it is a beast - at 183MHz, the V5-6000 pumps out 1.47Gigapixels per second. This is almost 1 billion pixels per second more than the GeForce. The Voodoo5 6000 will reach this level through the use of no less than four VSA-100 processors and 128MB of onboard RAM.

All of these new cards incorporate a completely new core. The VSA-100 Engine is a new chipset that promises to provide what the Voodoo3 could not: a 64MB frame buffer and full 32 bit colour rendering. There is also the implementation of FXT1 texture compression, the T-Buffer and full screen Anti-Aliasing. The addition of 4X AGP support will also be an improvement, considering the Voodoo3's lamentable lack of a proper AGP interface. The VAS-100 will also support large textures.

Full scene Anti-Aliasing is possibly one of the most important additions 3dfx has made, with very tangible benefits. While some cards support AA out of the box (like the Neon250), it has remained as something of a pipe dream on account of the performance penalties. What does it do? Basically, it eliminates the jagged edges found in games for a much more realistic environment. With the multi-pass rendering technique of the VSA-100, this has become quite feasible. Next we have 3dfx's 'T-Buffer'. The T-Buffer attempts to make games more cinematic with a minimal performance hit - It includes features such as motion blur, depth of field, soft reflections and soft shadows.

## Detailed Textures

FXT1 texturing is an advanced texture compression system used by the VSA-100. Much like S3TC, it allows cards to compress textures in hardware on the fly. Textures will become much richer and convincing, with no performance penalty. FXT1 allows a game artist to fit more and larger textures into a card's video memory and thereby have more detail in a scene with less on-card memory and less speed hits from AGP memory accesses. Although it hasn't seen the light of day in many titles, texture compression is becoming increasingly popular. Unreal Tournament, for instance, is sold with a second CD containing special S3TC levels. Games look noticeably better for texture compression.

## SLI on a Board

VSA stands for Voodoo Scaleable Architecture. The most unique aspect of the VSA is the ability to incorporate multiple chips onto a single card. There is a theoretical limit of 32 VSA-100 chips on a single card, although these could be incorporated by use of a daughterboard. In addition, each chip can address up to 64MB of local on-board memory. For example, a dual-chip 64MB VSA board has 32MB of RAM dedicated to each chip, whereas a single-chip board with the same amount of RAM has the entire 64MB to itself. At the higher end, a 32-chip solution can have up to 2GB of RAM.

## System requirements

Nevertheless, there are a few drawbacks to VSA. Supplying power to 128MB of RAM and 4 VSA-100 processors, the Voodoo5 6000 AGP is going to have major heat and power issues. The V5 6000 will be the first graphics card to require an external power supply. The card will plug into the wall via a small 'laptop' AC power adapter, known as 'Voodoo Volts'. This will provide 100W of clean power to the behemoth.

The other issue is the required CPU power. The Voodoo 5 is going to be extremely limited by the power of today's CPUs. As the Voodoo5 is reliant on CPUs for geometry calculations, a fast processor is of paramount importance. A CPU in excess of 600MHz will be required to do the raw power of the Voodoo5 justice.

## 3dfx 2000

3dfx are in an increasingly dire situation. Having been spurned by major OEMs with the Voodoo3, and considering the attention nVidia'sGeForce has been commanding, the Voodoo4/5 must be a success to remain a strong player in the 3D accelerator market. And with the staggering speeds 3dfx are promising, the Voodoo 4/5 may see them regain lost ground. Although we too are salivating at the prospect of the Voodoo4/5, the price does seem rather inhibiting. Either way, it's going to be an exciting year.

*Hugh Norton-Smith*

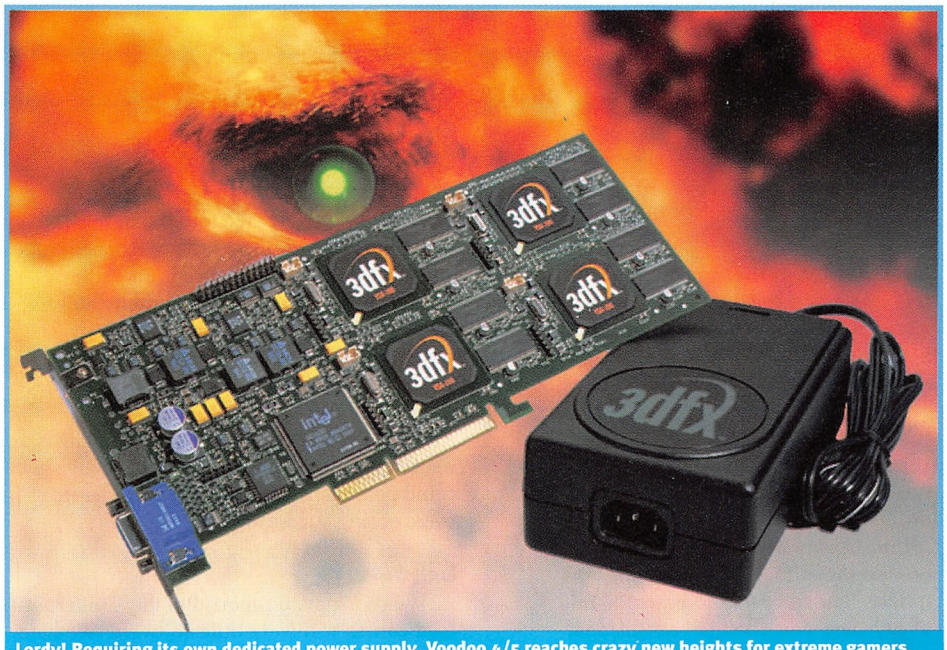
## VSA 100 SPECIFICATIONS

- **Fully integrated 128-bit 2D/3D Video Accelerator**
- **333 Megapixels/second**
- **333 Megatexels/second at 166MHz**
- **Up to 64MB RAM per chip**
- **Full AGP 4X support**
- **32-bit RGBA color rending**
- **24-bi floating-point Z and W buffer**
- **8-bit stencil buffer**
- **32-bit textures**
- **multi-triangle strips and fans**
- **per-pixel, exponential fog**
- **Single-cycle trilinear mipmapping**
- **3dfx FXT-1 and DXTC texture compression**
- **2k x 2k texture support**
- **PCI and AGP bus support**
- **350MHz RAMDAC**





**Multiple VSA-100 chips - game performance multipliers.**



**Lordy! Requiring its own dedicated power supply, Voodoo 4/5 reaches crazy new heights for extreme gamers.**

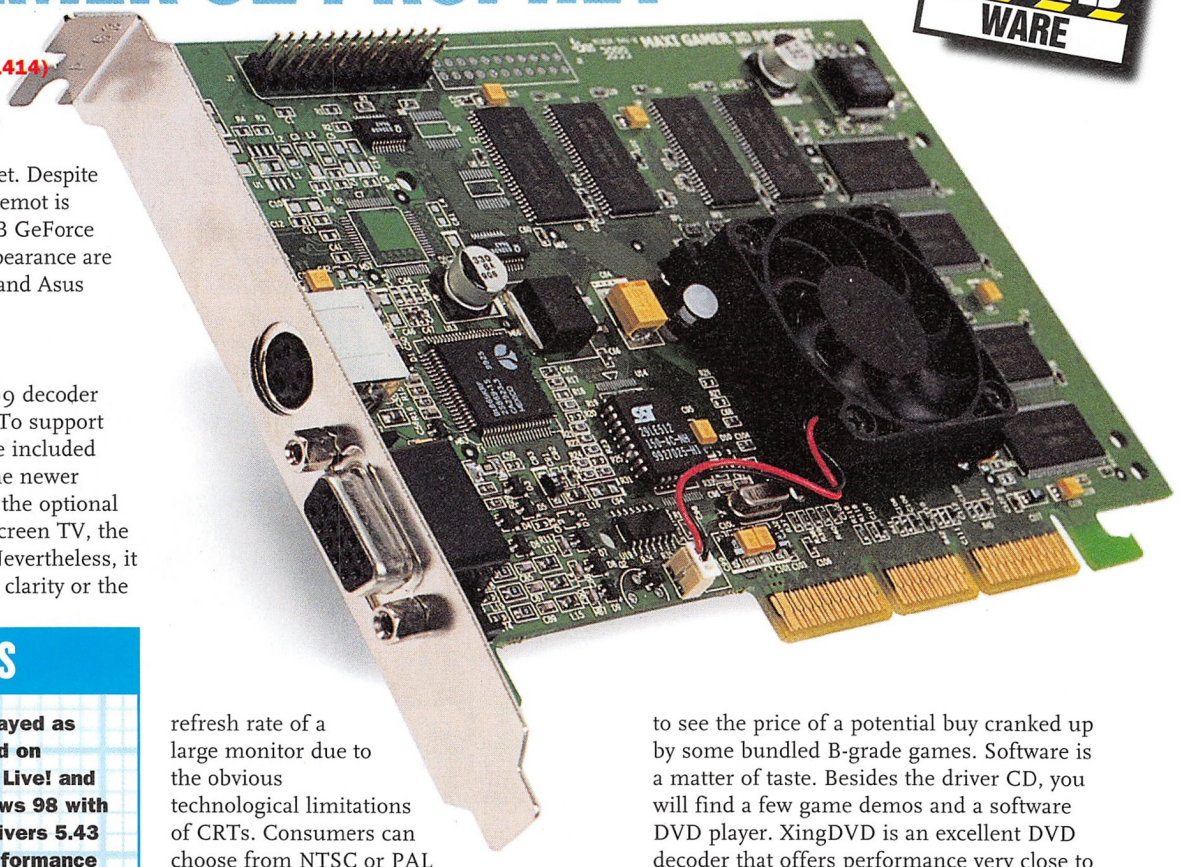
HOTWARE

# GUILLEMOT MAXI GAMER 32 PROPHET

PCPowerPlay ULTIMATE HARDWARE

**RRP: $599**
**Distributor: Ubisoft (02 9362 1414)**

Like the Asus V6600 and 3D Blaster Annihilator, the 3D Prophet integrates nVidia's revolutionary GeForce 256 chipset. Despite the addition of TV-Out, the Guillemot is essentially a stock standard 32MB GeForce card. Performance, price and appearance are almost the same as the Creative and Asus offerings.



## TV-Output

The ubiquitous Brooktree 869 decoder chip is responsible for TV-Out. To support TV-Out, you will need to use the included Guillemot drivers rather than the newer nVidia reference drivers. Using the optional S-Video connector and a large screen TV, the picture quality is outstanding. Nevertheless, it doesn't offer anywhere near the clarity or the refresh rate of a large monitor due to the obvious technological limitations of CRTs. Consumers can choose from NTSC or PAL output through software. The question remains, however, why anybody would want TV-output in these days of mammoth monitors and ridiculous resolutions.

## BENCHMARKS

**All benchmarks (results displayed as frames per second) conducted on Pentium III 550, Abit BE6, SB Live! and 128 MB of RAM, under Windows 98 with DirectX7. Nvidia reference drivers 5.43 were used on both cards. Performance might increase with upcoming drivers.**

**Quake III Arena Test (v1.08)**
High Quality
**Asus V6600: 58**
**3D Prophet: 59**
Normal Quality
**Asus V6600: 85**
**3D Prophet: 87**
Fast Quality
**Asus V6600: 92**
**3D Prophet: 91**

**3D Mark:**
**Asus V6600: 5642**
**3D Prophet: 5634**

## OPTIMISING

**Interested in optimising Quake3 for the GeForce? The following commands will allow you to run Quake3 in a high polygon mode, fully utilising the powerful geometry engine of the GeForce:**

**r_lodBias -2**
**r_subdivisions -1**
**r_lodCurveError 10000**
**vid_restart**

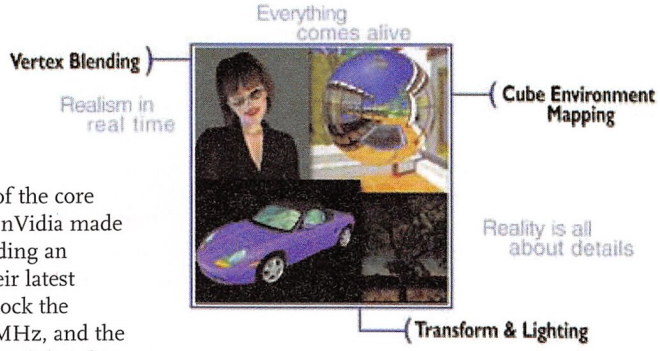
**Although this does have a small performance hit, it does look MUCH better. You will have to re-enter this every time you change resolutions.**

## Overclocking

With all GeForce cards, owners have the opportunity to overclock both the default operating speed of the onboard memory (166MHz) and the timing of the core processor clock (120MHz). nVidia made the excellent move of including an overclocking utility with their latest drivers. It allows users to clock the memory all the way to 180MHz, and the core up to 160MHz. We found that the board operated reliably at 184 MHz memory and 132 MHz core. Any speeds above these levels resulted in horrendous unreliability. Needless to say, there is quite a jump in performance; especially considering that memory bandwidth is the principle bottleneck of the GeForce. The key point is not to EXPECT your board to overclock. It really is a matter of fluke. Two boards on the same shelf could potentially have completely different overclocking success rates.

## DVD-ready

We're happy to report that the Guillemot card comes with very little software. We hate to see the price of a potential buy cranked up by some bundled B-grade games. Software is a matter of taste. Besides the driver CD, you will find a few game demos and a software DVD player. XingDVD is an excellent DVD decoder that offers performance very close to a fully-fledged hardware-decoding card. Contrary to nVidia's specifications, the GeForce does incorporate motion compensation - but be aware that this does not make it a genuine DVD hardware decoder.




**The obligatory marketing diagram**

Ultimately, it comes down to price. If you are in the upgrade cycle, the 3D Prophet is a solid choice, particularly since the only competition this Christmas will come from the inferior Savage 2000 and the ATI Rage Fury Maxx products.

***Hugh Norton-Smith***

## VERDICT

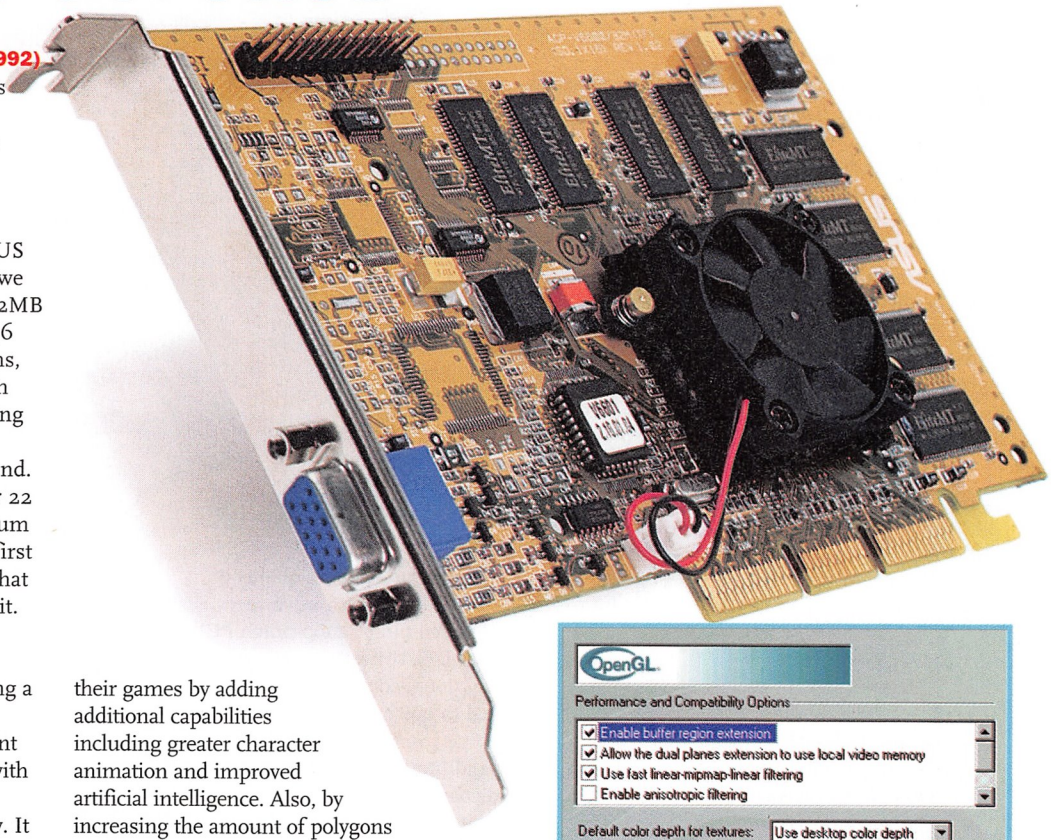
The most fully featured GeForce card yet. Bravo Guillemot!

HOTWARE

# ASUS AGP-V6600 GeFORCE

**RRP: $599**

**Distributor: Cassa Australia (07 5445 2992)**



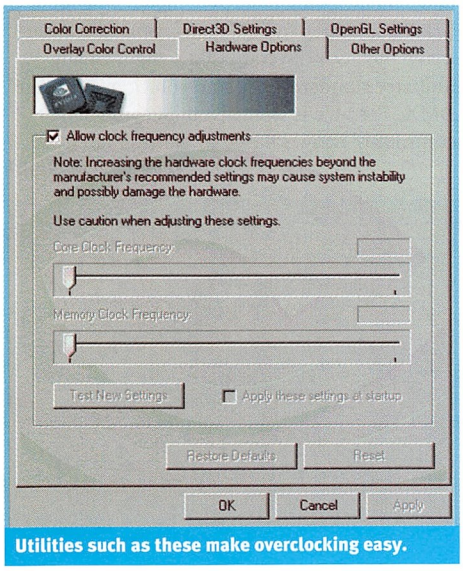
Besides the packaging, the V6600 is physically identical to the Creative Annihilator reviewed in PCPP #44. In the rush to get cards to market, both manufacturers have followed nVidia's reference design closely. Obviously, the performance is identical. Unlike most ASUS cards, there is no TV-Out or TV-In. What we have here is a plain GeForce card with a 32MB frame buffer. What makes the GeForce 256 chipset so revolutionary? In technical terms, the GeForce is a single-chip processor with integrated transform, lighting and rendering engines that are capable of processing a minimum of 10 million polygons per second. The GeForce 256's GPU incorporates over 22 million transistors, compared to the Pentium III's 9 million. Most importantly, it's the first consumer based graphics controller chip that is equipped with a graphics processing unit.

## The GPU

Basically there are three stages in creating a 3D environment: transform, lighting and rendering. Transforming is the floating-point intensive task to 'transform' the 3D-scene with all its objects into a 2D picture that can be displayed. Lighting is pretty self-explanatory. It is an optional stage that calculates the lighting of objects in relation to other light sources. Finally, rendering involves the texturing, 'skinning' or shading of the wireframe world.

In the current generation of video cards (such as the TNT, TNT2, Savage4, and Voodoo3), the CPU is responsible for the transformation and lighting calculations, and the video card is responsible for rendering tasks. The addition of the GPU on the GeForce 256 adds hardware acceleration for transform and lighting. Because the GPU processes transform and lighting, those calculations are offloaded from the CPU. This results in decreased CPU load. By freeing up valuable CPU cycles, developers can enhance their games by adding additional capabilities including greater character animation and improved artificial intelligence. Also, by increasing the amount of polygons used to render objects, the transform capabilities of the GeForce will provide models that are a more accurate representation of the game world.

The image quality on the GeForce is stunning. If you have ever had the pleasure of seeing a TNT2 in action, the GeForce offers identical quality. However, expect the image quality to be coupled with stunning frame rates and the ability to run 32-bit colour at acceptable speeds. You can also be confident that you can run all your games at beautiful 1280x1024 resolution. After using 32-bit colour in Quake3, it really is hard to go back to the comparatively lacklustre 16-bit.




Utilities such as these make overclocking easy.

## A winner

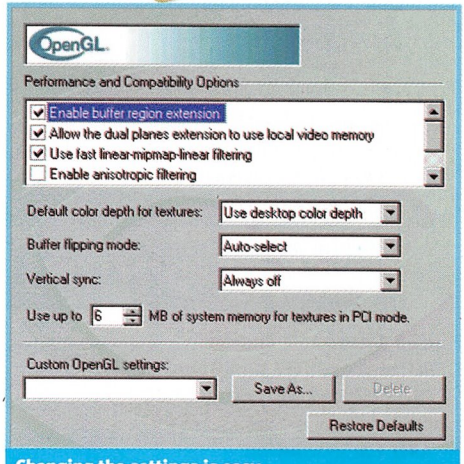
If you're hoping that the V6600 will come bundled with some games to show off the power of the GeForce, you're going to be rather disappointed - ASUS have thrown in both Turok: Seeds of Evil and Extreme G 2. Neither of these games comes with hardware T&L support, which seems rather odd.

Really, the fact is that almost all GeForce cards are identical, with the only differences being price, drivers, support and the software bundle. Despite the mediocre software, the V6600 comes up trumps.

*Hugh Norton-Smith*

## VERDICT

A very respectable offering from one of the world's leading manufacturers. We can't wait for the Deluxe version with TV-In/Out!




Changing the settings is easy.

## BENCHMARKS

**All benchmarks (results displayed as frames per second) conducted on Pentium III 550, Abit BE6, SB Live! and 128 MB of RAM, under Windows 98 with DirectX7. Nvidia reference drivers 5.43 were used on both cards. Performance might increase with upcoming drivers.**

**Quake III Arena Test (v1.08)**

High Quality

**Asus V6600: 58**

**3D Prophet: 59**

Normal Quality

**Asus V6600: 85**

**3D Prophet: 87**

Fast Quality

**Asus V6600: 92**

**3D Prophet: 91**

**3D Mark:**

**Asus V6600: 5642**

**3D Prophet: 5634**

HOTWARE

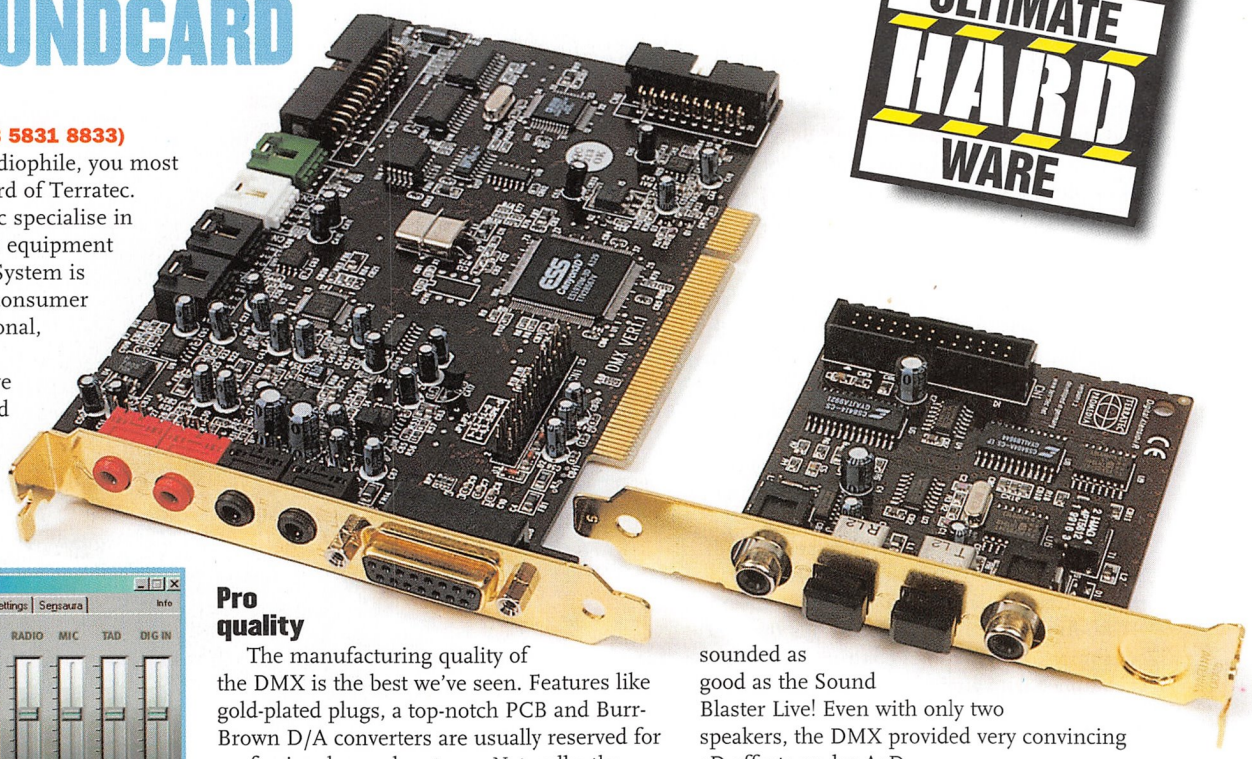
# TERRATEC DMX SOUNDCARD

PC PowerPlay ULTIMATE HARDWARE

**RRP: $349**

**Distributor: Innovision (03 5831 8833)**

Unless you are an audiophile, you most likely won't have heard of Terratec. Based in Germany, Terratec specialise in ultra-high end digital audio equipment for PCs. The DMX Sound System is Terratec's first shot at the consumer PC market, with a professional, quality card. Although it is significantly more expensive than your average PC sound card, the DMX does feature a staggeringly impressive feature list.






The control panel - here you can select the volume.

## TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

- **ESS Canyon3D Engine**
- **4 speaker HRTF positional audio**
- **DirectSound/DirectSound3D acceleration**
- **A3D 1.0 Emulation**
- **Sensaura MacroFX and MultiDrive**
- **Environmental Audio extension support (EAX)**
- **64 voices hardware wave table synthesizer**
- **Hardware accelerated Joystick Port External connectors**
- **digital output (optical and coaxial) with 32, 44.1 and 48 kHz**
- **digital input (optical or coaxial) with 32, 44.1 and 48 kHz**
- **2x Stereo Line Out**
- **Line-In**
- **MIC-In**
- **MIDI/Joystick Interface (IBM 15 pin Sub-D)**

**Onboard Connectors**

- **Connector for digital interface (included)**
- **WaveBlaster compatible connector for optional Wavetable daughter board**
- **Radio connector**
- **2x CD Audio (4-pin MPC Molex)**
- **AUX (4-pin MPC Molex)**
- **TAD (4-pin MPC Molex)**

## Pro quality

The manufacturing quality of the DMX is the best we've seen. Features like gold-plated plugs, a top-notch PCB and Burr-Brown D/A converters are usually reserved for professional sound systems. Naturally, the signal to noise ratio is unparalleled. The package comes with a separate daughter-board for additional connections. With both optical and coaxial SP/DIF ins and outs, this is definitely for the digital music lovers. Hook up your Minidisc or DVD and record in full digital. Or, use the card as part of a fully digital home entertainment unit - DVD never sounded so good. Also on the board is a radio connector to add a radio-receiving unit. This allows you to listen to a wide variety of radio frequencies via your PC. Unlike most modern cards, the DMX includes a MIDI interface. If you own a high quality MIDI soundboard, such as the Yamaha DBX 50, it would be well worth attaching.

## Sensaura technology

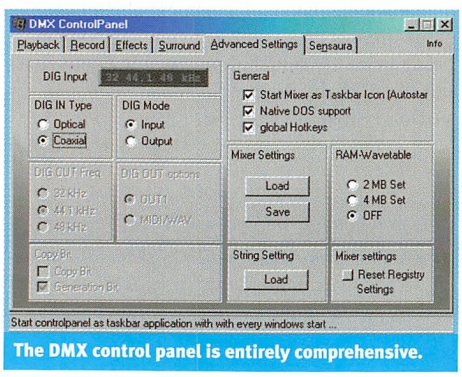
At the heart of the DMX is the powerful ESS Canyon3D processor. This is the same chip that will be featured in Diamond's upcoming Monster Sound MX400. One of the advantages of Canyon3D is the wide range of API support. By using the Sensaura technology, Terratec have covered A3D 1.x, Direct Sound3D, EAX, and MacroFX. With EAX enabled and four speakers, Half-Life sounded as good as the Sound Blaster Live! Even with only two speakers, the DMX provided very convincing 3D effects under A3D.

Unlike the average software included with Aureal and Creative boards, the DMX came with some real applications: WinJey, a fully featured MP3 player; WaveLab Lite, an audio editor; Buzz, a composer program; and Mixman Studio ES, a 16 track mixer for the wannabe DJs. With the included software suite, amateur musicians can do some really impressive work.

## New standard

The Sound System DMX sets new standards for PC sound performance. Extensive connectivity options, Canyon3D technology, uncompromising audio quality coupled with a solid software bundle and universal compatibility makes the DMX a cutting edge product. Carefully thought out features such as the two CD-Audio connectors, external wavetable connector, ActiveRadio RDS radio module expansion and digital I/O in both S/PDIF co-axial and TOS-Link optical format make the SoundSystem DMX the ultimate industry standard PC audio solution. With the DMX, Terratec is destined to become a commonly known name in gaming circles.

*Hugh Norton-Smith*




The DMX control panel is entirely comprehensive.




Select your source and set the volume!

Pioneer

# FX #12
## Mind Blowing






The MOSFET45 power chip, built into all new Pioneer CD Tuners.

PWH-340-MB

HOTWARE SPECIAL

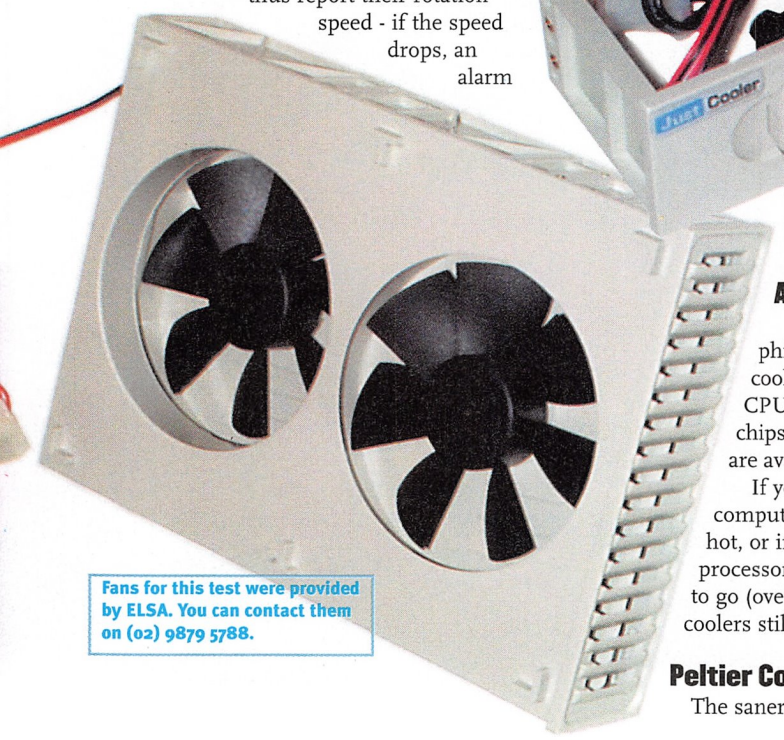
# KEEPING IT COOL

## PCPP'S GUIDE TO PC COOLING

Nowadays, every PC CPU has not just a heat sink - those finned or spiked chunks of aluminium - but also at least one fan strapped onto it. The heat sink's various protrusions provide a much larger surface area for cooling air to flow over, and the fan or fans keep that air flowing. The heat sink and fan combination is often referred to as a "cooler", and it's there to keep your CPU running. CPUs are designed to shut down before they cook - but a computer that's too hot and keeps crashing all the time is scarcely better than a completely broken one. Excessive temperatures can eventually damage some components, but usually they just make the computer a far more unreliable piece of equipment.

### The typical setup

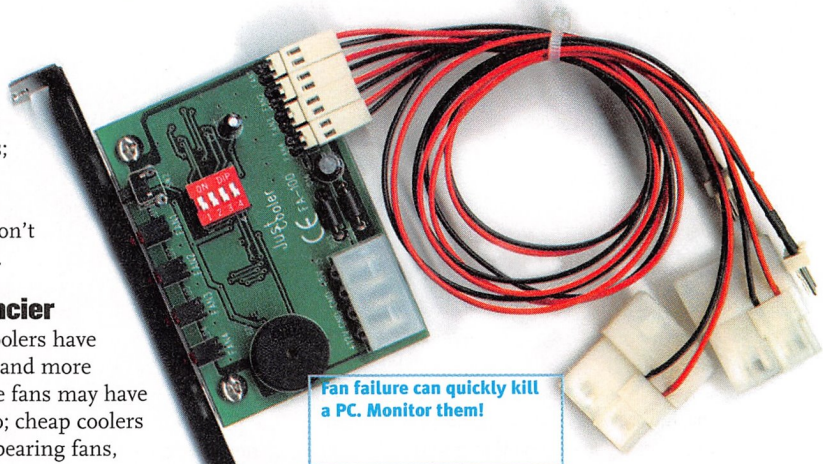
A normal Slot 1 processor cooler is a basic affair - typically featuring a big long heat sink and a couple of fans. Fans with a three-pin connector plug into the special three-pin headers on recent motherboards and can thus report their rotation speed - if the speed drops, an alarm can sound. Some fans have the three-pin plug but only two wires; they'll run from a motherboard fan connection, but won't report their speed.



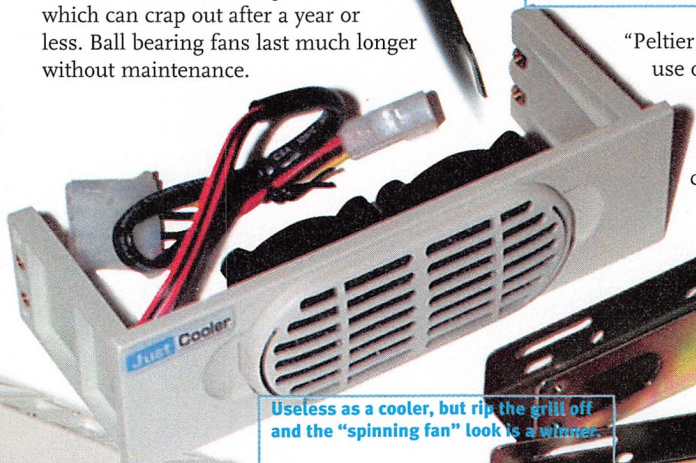
Fans for this test were provided by ELSA. You can contact them on (02) 9879 5788.

### Something fancier

Fancier chip coolers have bigger heat sinks, and more powerful fans. The fans may have better bearings too; cheap coolers often have sleeve bearing fans, which can crap out after a year or less. Ball bearing fans last much longer without maintenance.



Fan failure can quickly kill a PC. Monitor them!



Useless as a cooler, but rip the grill off and the "spinning fan" look is a winner.

### And others...

The same basic philosophy applies to coolers for other shapes of CPU, and even graphics chipsets. All shapes and sizes are available.

If you're running your computer somewhere really hot, or if you're running your processor faster than it's meant to go (overclocking), heftier coolers still are in order.

### Peltier Coolers

The saner serious overclockers use "Peltier effect" coolers. These make use of a block of special transistors arranged in parallel, which have the curious property (when a current flows through them) of getting hot on one side and cold on the other. Put a big fat cooler on the hot side, strap the assembly to a chip so that the cold side touches it, and you have a gizmo that can cool a chip colder than the ambient temperature. On the down side, a Peltier cooler makes its heat sink hotter in order to dissipate a given amount of heat from the chip than a plain cooler would, so they generally need bigger heat sinks and bigger fans. Peltier elements, too, can be destroyed by excess heat. Condensation becomes a problem too.

### Vapour phase cooling

If Peltier cooling isn't enough, the next step is vapour phase cooling, which, essentially, puts a little refrigerator in the computer case; see

*http://www.kryotech.com/*. And then there's water cooling, where cold water is pumped through a water-jacket that straps to the processor.

## Other Solutions

Even these systems are no good, however, if the cooler assembly makes poor contact with the CPU.

The idea is to mate the heat sink as well as possible to the top of the chip package; any air gaps between the chip surface and the heat sink will impede heat flow. Many coolers have a conductive pad on their underside, or come with self-adhesive conductive tape, but the best solution is heat sink grease, which comes with some coolers and is cheaply available from good computer and electronics stores (buy the smallest tube of it you can get!).

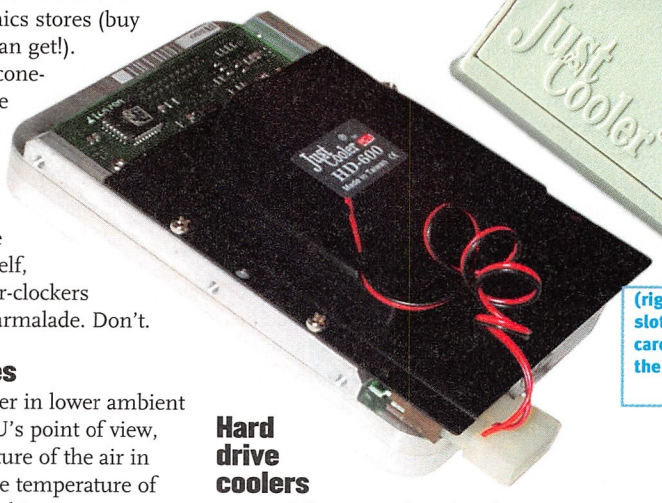
Heat sink grease is a silicone-based compound that's more conductive than air, but less conductive than aluminium; the idea is to apply a really thin layer of it to the chip, so it just fills the tiny air gaps and doesn't, itself, impede heat flow. Many over-clockers spread on the grease like marmalade. Don't.

## Ambient temperatures

All coolers also work better in lower ambient temperatures. From the CPU's point of view, "ambient" isn't the temperature of the air in your computer room - it's the temperature of the air in your computer. And in many computers, which languish in cheap mini-tower cases with one weedy fan sucking as best it can through the power supply, this inside temperature is surprisingly high.

As well as the standard front-of-box fan mount in most tower cases, there are a plethora of other fan-based products that aim to drop case temperature.

Add-on fans usually blow air out through a rear panel slot or a drive bay. These latter coolers can be dedicated, bay-filling units like the Twin Turbo made by Just Cooler and sold under other names by various other companies, or they can be front-of-bay units designed to have a hard disk mount behind them.

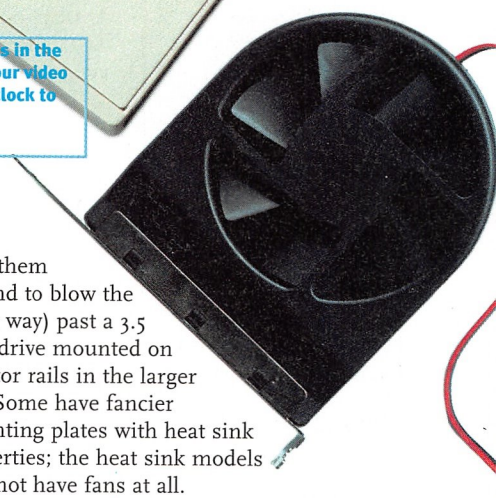






(above) Slip it into a 3.5 inch bay and expel hot case air.

(right) Pop this in the slot next to your video card and overclock to the max!



## Hard drive coolers

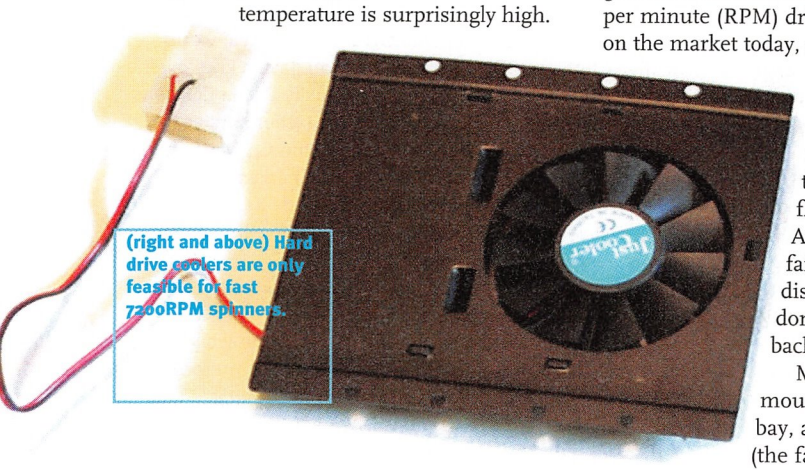
Hard drives need cooling because they spin their platters very quickly, and friction between the platters and the air inside the drive generates considerable heat. 5400 revolution per minute (RPM) drives, the slowest spinning on the market today, run relatively cool.

7200RPM drives usually don't have any problems, either. 10,000RPM drives, though, require extra air-flow in almost any climate. And having a hard disk failure can be an absolute disaster - especially if you don't perform regular backups.

Most hard drive coolers mount in a 5.25 inch drive bay, and blow air in or out (the fans are often reversible - turn them around to blow the other way) past a 3.5 inch drive mounted on adaptor rails in the larger bay. Some have fancier mounting plates with heat sink properties; the heat sink models may not have fans at all.

Recently, a new kind of drive cooler has arrived. It screws onto the drive itself, and still allows it to mount in a regular 3.5 inch bay. The cooler draws air past only one side of the drive, and there's no air exchange with the outside so high case temperatures will prevent it from doing anything worthwhile, but if your case has decent ventilation then a low-profile cooler like this can work well.

***Daniel Rutter***




(right and above) Hard drive coolers are only feasible for fast 7200RPM spinners.


FANCY YOURSELF AS A GAMES DEVELOPER?
THINK YOU'VE GOT WHAT IT TAKES?

Then submit your game in the 1999 Australian Festival Of Gaming competition.
**The Australian Festival Of Gaming** has been established to encourage new games development talent throughout Australia, and a major part of the Festival is a competition open to young, independent developers from across the country. There's also the tasty prize of a **Silicon Graphics Workstation** and **3D Studio Max**, worth over $14,000, for the winner.

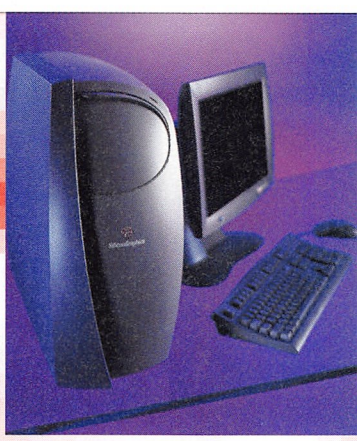
SO WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR?

For further information and an entry form, see **http://online.next.com.au/industry/**

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Entries close: 31st January, 2000.



AFG 99 AUSTRALIAN FESTIVAL OF GAMING

# SETUP

Silicon help and advice with Daniel Rutter.

## WRITE TO:

**Setup**
**PC PowerPlay**
**PO BOX 634**
**Strawberry Hills**
**NSW 2016**
*setup@pcpowerplay.next.com.au*

When you write remember to include as much pertinent information as possible. Send your CONFIG.SYS and AUTOEXEC.BAT and any associated *.INI files for Windows that might tell me more about your problem. Give me as detailed an explanation as you can and be sure to include as much detail as possible about your PC. Feel free to email your questions or, if you want to snail mail, please remember to write clearly or better still print your letters.
Please note that due to the volume of messages we receive, we cannot guarantee a response to your queries.

## NEW SLOT?

**Q** Due to my aging PC, I have been in the market for a new motherboard and found something interesting. It seems that there is a new kind of slot available on some motherboards. Vendors call them AMR slots. They seem to replace AGP where there is an integrated video card.

I was wondering what these AMR slots were... perhaps a new path to faster and better games?

Also I have noticed a new feature in BIOS: the dual BIOS feature of Gigabyte motherboards and the dual BIOS on MSI motherboards. The Gigabyte boards feature two physical BIOS, but the MSI boards feature one physical BIOS and two BIOS in the single chip. So how do you flash the dual BIOS boards?

**Yi Huang**

**A** AMR is short for "Audio Modem Riser" and has nothing to do with video. It's an Intel standard for optional modem and sound hardware. If you want an internal modem, you can plug an AMR one into the special slot, and not have to waste one of your conventional expansion slots on it.

As for MSI, a press release trumpeting their proud acceptance of an award for the 6163 Pro motherboard says that board has twin BIOSes. It would appear to be an error. The board has only one BIOS chip and no automatic backup - according, at least, to MSI's spec sheet for it. The 6163 Pro does, however, have a "SafeBIOS" feature which aims to prevent any accidental writes to the BIOS, and which could perhaps be mistaken for a full backup.

The basic procedure of flashing the BIOS on dual-chip boards is no different from doing it on a plain motherboard, but Gigabyte provide an extra setup program, accessed by pressing F1 while booting, to access the dual BIOS functions.




**An NEC SX5 supercomputer. Observe absence of easy-access flip-open side door, carry handle, round mouse or misleading benchmark brochure**

## FLOPS?

**Q** I have just recently been reading in a friend's mag about Apples and the new G4. It seems Apple are making a big deal about it hitting the big 1 gigaflops. How many floating point operations a second can the latest PC CPUs do, including the K7, PIII and the Celerons?

**Jason Dunnett**

**A** A 500MHz P-III Xeon is good for something like 500 million floating point operations per second (MFLOPS), peak, with sustained rates of 20% to 30% of that figure. It can't maintain the peak speed because the computer's main memory can't feed it data fast enough. The PC100 architecture which current PCs are based on, and the PC133 architecture that debuts with the new P-IIIs, just isn't fast enough for industrial strength floating point work.

The recent 700 and 733MHz P-IIIs do proportionately better than a 500MHz Xeon, depending on the task; they have more grunt than the 500MHz Xeon, but less cache, so more complex tasks suffer. The more cache you have, the less dependent you usually are on main memory speed.

Generally speaking, for ordinary home and business computing tasks, a 400MHz PowerPC G4 is roughly equal to a 500MHz G3, and they both roughly level-peg with a 600MHz Pentium III. The G4 actually can do better than 1000MFLOPS, but not in a Macintosh, because they only have PC100 memory.

The new Pentium III E CPUs are a bit faster at a given clock speed than the older P-IIIs thanks to their slightly more sophisticated design, so a Coppermine P-III 700 or 733 is roughly the equal of a 450 or 500MHz G4.

The Athlon's superior 200MHz EV6 processor helps it to beat the P-III by about 15% for floating point operations, at the same clock speed. A 733MHz P-III level-pegs with an Athlon 700 for pretty much anything else.

Incidentally, the Cray 1, the king of the world in supercomputing in 1976, could manage better than 100MFLOPS for many real world operations. If you gave a G4 Power Mac the same tasks as the Cray was doing, you'd see rather similar performance. So the G4 Macs might actually have qualified as supercomputers, just as Apple says they do - but only 23 years ago!

## RAM "SWEET SPOT"

**Q** Hi. Can you tell me what the optimal amount of memory is for Win 98? I always thought that the more RAM you had, the better, but I read something on the net that said the "sweet spot" for Win 98 is 128MB. Apparently, any more than this and it can actually slow things down. Any help would be greatly appreciated.

**Christian**

**A** Stuff and nonsense! But, to be charitable, there might be a tiny grain of truth in there. Older motherboards, for instance those using the Intel HX chipset, can only cache the first 64MB of RAM and lose the benefit of the processor cache when accessing memory above that limit. This can, indeed, degrade performance. But no current boards have this problem.

128MB of RAM is, however, the

# LETTER OF THE MONTH

## ^@#!$ PING!

**Q** I have just recently got internet access and am enjoying (though not to the full extent) playing Half-Life, Team Fortress Classic and other games. My problem is "ping" or latency. I press Tab to reveal the ping of myself and others, and while their ping is down in the range of 50 to 300 I find myself with a horrifyingly high ping of around 1000 (700 at best). Even with GameSpy it only connects me to games with a ping of high 600s. Is it possible to lower my ping in any way without having to buy a new modem?

**Stuart Cormack**

**A** Any dial-up internet user in Australia will have lousy ping times to the rest of the world. And, commonly, the pipe from one Australian user to an Australian game server is pretty slow, too. The exception is if the user and server share an upstream service provider - for instance, if both of their ISPs connect to the same Telstra link, or they share an ISP.

A new modem won't help you, unless it's a cable modem, which is a whole different technology and gives you not just a much wider pipe, but a connection rather further up the branching hierarchy that ends with the miserable modem users. Even then, connections to overseas servers are likely to be unacceptably laggy for twitch games. The people you see with sub-100 millisecond pings have cable modems, ISDN connections or some other high-speed link, and they're not too many network hops from the server. If your ISP hosts any game servers, you're likely to enjoy much better performance - sub-300ms pings, and probably sub-200ms.




**LETTER OF THE MONTH WINS THE MOST EXCELLENT SIDEWINDER AND DUAL STRIKE CONTROL PADS FROM MICROSOFT'S PREMIERE RANGE OF GAME CONTROLLERS. CHEERS MICROSOFT!**

point beyond which the benefit you see from adding more memory is likely to be rather less impressive. 196MB is not nearly so much of an improvement over 128MB as 128MB is over 64MB. If you're into 3D rendering, or you like playing with titanic images in paint programs, or you're just a compulsive multitasker, the more RAM you can get the better. For any game on the market today, though, 128MB is perfectly adequate. Save your money.

## MODEM SPEED

**Q** I was receiving a rather large e-mail, and the weird thing was, it was transferring at a steady 12k/sec. Seriously, I looked at the connection status and timed how long it took to increase data received by 100k, and it was 8.5 seconds. I use a 56K V.90 modem, but 56 kilobits is only 7 kilobytes, and I wasn't even connected that fast. How was my transfer rate double the capacity of my modem?

**Michael Wulfsohn**

**A** In a word: compression. Modems have for many years had hardware compression built in, and it's usually turned on by default (some people turn it off, to try to wring a slightly faster ping time out of the hardware).

As with all data compression, though, you'll see the best results from highly compressible material, like the text of that e-mail. You're not likely to notice stunning performance when accessing internet text files, because the limiting factor in that case is the speed at which the distant server sends you data. This is often rather slower than your modem can accept it, compression or no compression. But when you're grabbing e-mail from your ISP's server, there's nothing to hobble the data rate between you and the ISP.

Most things you download - pictures, movie files, normal and self-extracting zip archives - are already compressed, and thus don't show any improvement, no matter how fast the server providing them can fling the bits your way.

## DIFFERENT BRANDS, SAME CHIPSET...?

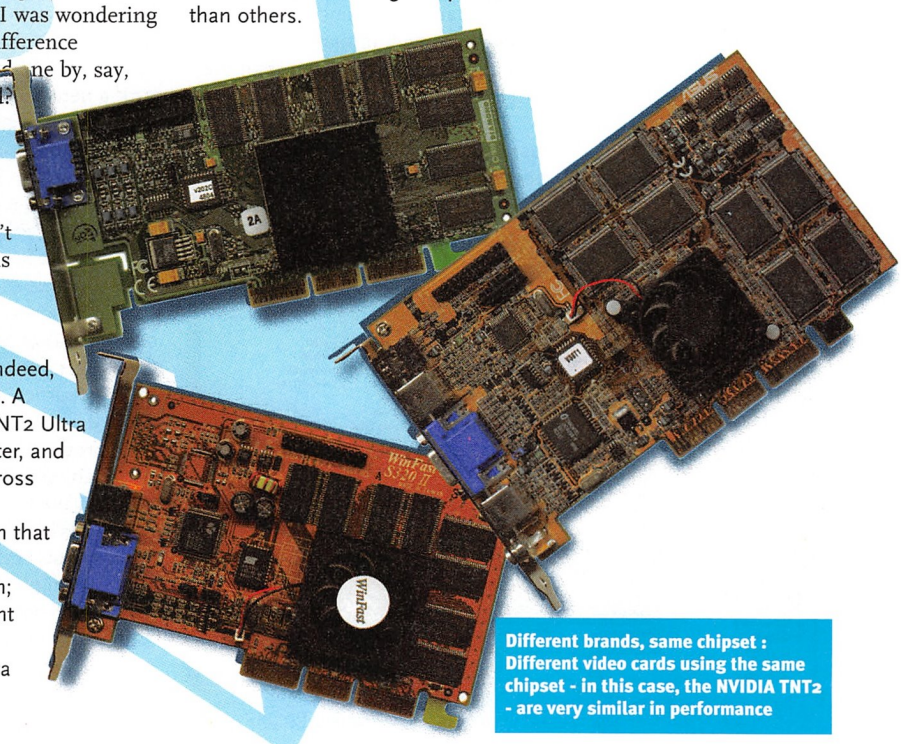
**Q** I just bought a Gigabyte TNT2 video card, and I was wondering if there was much difference between this card and one by, say, Creative or Diamond? I have been told by some people that there is, but I've been told by other people that there isn't because the chipset is the same. Who do I believe?

**Frosty**

**A** The chipset is, indeed, exactly the same. A TNT2 is a TNT2; a TNT2 Ultra is the same, only faster, and again is the same across manufacturers.

This doesn't mean that all TNT2 boards are created equal, though; they can have different RAM, different chip coolers, different extra features (TV out, for instance), and various differences in board layout. Not to mention different software bundles, and different drivers - though, for the basic functions, nVidia's reference Detonator drivers will work with any TNT-series board.

Since there doesn't seem to be any nVidia-based boards out there that are actually badly made, the most important differences for most gamers are the RAM speeds and the quality of the chip cooler; both of these have a direct bearing on how much you can overclock the card with a utility like Powerstrip or TNTClk. Mind you, this may or may not be related to the stock speed of the card - some are clocked higher by default than others.




**Different brands, same chipset : Different video cards using the same chipset - in this case, the NVIDIA TNT2 - are very similar in performance**

READER'S TECH TIPS

## MULTI-SOUND-TASKING

**Here's one for anybody with an SB Live wielding associate who delights in showing you how he can play 10+ MP3s simultaneously. With Winamp running, right click on the main player window and choose Options, then Preferences from the drop-down list. Click on Output under Plug-ins and select the Nullsoft DirectSound Plug-in, and bingo! Now you can play multiple MP3s or play a game (helps if it uses DirectSound, of course, but most seem to work fine) and listen to an MP3 or two at the same time!**

**Tom Butler**

## MONITOR WOES

**Q** I am writing to you whilst I am still in control of my mental faculties, although they are slipping away quite quickly now and a black cloud is descending around my world. Having dreamed of owning a large monitor for what seemed like an eternity, I sold off my children for scientific experiments and with the proceeds purchased a 19 inch monitor. All was fine till the day my young nephew put a SCRATCH right in the centre of the screen. Now instead of concentrating on the world of role-playing and surviving a hail of bullets and plasma cannons, I am frozen on the one spot, not moving, because my gaze is fixed on the one place on the screen. I have tried 14 litres of glass cleaner hoping desperately to get rid of it but to no avail. Please help me.

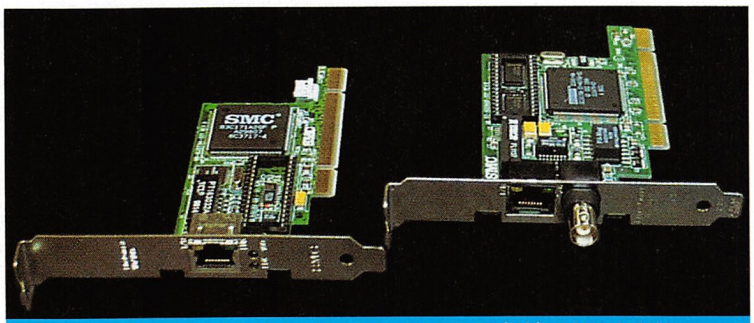
**Tunnel vision**

**A** Welcome to Screwedsville. Population: You!

There's bugger-all you can do about serious scratches on a monitor. Very light scratches can be polished out with jeweller's rouge or, for those few people on the planet who don't have a ready supply of jeweller's rouge, toothpaste. But a more serious scratch - say, what you get when some kid with an obvious death wish drags his geometry set compass across the screen - is probably unfixable.

In theory, you can polish it out with finer and finer grades of sandpaper, ending up with the above-mentioned very gentle abrasives. But since all remotely recent monitors have anti-glare coatings and other fanciness on their faces, you'll end up making a funny looking patch much bigger than the original scratch.

The magic see-through resins used for "invisible" windscreen repairs may help - they're unlikely to vanish the scratch, but they might make it less obvious. Failing that, stick-on window film might help. Or it might not.




**Category 5 or BNC? : Two PCI network cards, one 100BaseT (left) and one hybrid 10BaseT/10Base2 (right)**

## CATEGORY 5 OR BNC?

**Q** Whilst on my monthly sojourn in the local computer hardware vendor emplacement I found to my surprise as I reached for a new network card, that standing just beside the trusty BNC (co-ax) card, was a Category 5 Ethernet card. This caused me great distress and I was forced to turn to the bible (PCPP) for guidance.

As I have only recently been introduced to the wonders of LAN tournaments I'm somewhat of a newcomer to this aspect of computer technology. What I really need to know is: which card do I buy in order to participate in LAN events - Cat. 5 or BNC?

**Karl "Lillith" Williams**

**A** The rectangular socket you're talking about isn't "Cat 5" (Category 5 is a cable grade, not a connector), it's an RJ-58 socket. RJ-58 connectors are used on 10BaseT and 100BaseT Ethernet network cables and, as you've noticed, they're not compatible with the old-style round coaxial connectors that come on 10Base2 Ethernet cables.

If a network card has only an RJ-58 socket, it's almost definitely a 10BaseT/100BaseT card, which can work with either plain 10 megabit per second Ethernet or the newer 100 megabit Fast Ethernet standard, both of which use RJ-58 connectors. Old network cards might have only a BNC connector for 10 megabit Ethernet over coaxial cables (10Base2). 10Base2 is a lousy system, especially for LAN parties, because its old-style "bus" configuration makes it highly error-prone. Any break in the network chain, anywhere, kills the whole segment until it's fixed.

10BaseT and 100BaseT cost more because you need a "hub" for everyone to plug into, but interrupted connections and dodgy cables only do in that one connection, not the whole network. And hubs are cheap these days. For this reason, all sizeable LAN parties run 10/100BaseT, and if you've only got an old 10Base2 card, you'll be out of luck.

The best network card for general purpose, fits-anywhere gaming is a hybrid 10BaseT/10Base2 card, with both kinds of connector. These are still the most common kind of network card. A 10 megabit only card means you won't be able to take advantage of 100BaseT if it's available, but you'll still be able to connect at the lower speed, and it's more than fast enough for games. 100BaseT is nice when you're copying that 108MB patch file that'll let you start playing, though!

## CHANGING FILE ASSOCIATIONS

**Q** How do I change file extension associations? I'm asking this because I have a few .log files (which are basically text files) which for some reason Kodak Imaging for Windows has decided that all .log files are to be associated with it.

This problem also affected all of my .scm files (the files StarCraft uses as maps) and these files are now identified as ICQ users...

How can I remedy this situation?

**Matt Jenkins**

**A** The official way to change associations is to go to View -> Folder Options -> File Types from any Explorer window, then futz about trying to figure out what's associated with what. The quick and dirty alternative is to go to Start -> Run and type "winfile", which will give you good old fashioned File Manager and let you associate files with a particular extension with a program in the simple Windows 3.x way. The interface is less than gorgeous, but it works, and overrules those fancy-pants installers.




**Changing file associations : Good old File Manager still has its uses...**

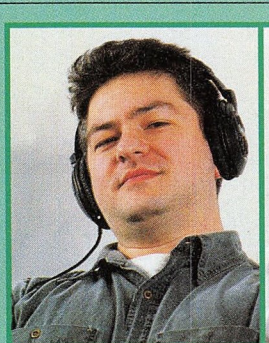

HYPER
OUT NOW
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Ultima iX: Ascension
Turok Rage Wars
Fighting Force 2
interstate 82
Toy Commander
and more!
COMING TO PLAYSTATION 2
Munch's Oddysee
Huge preview!

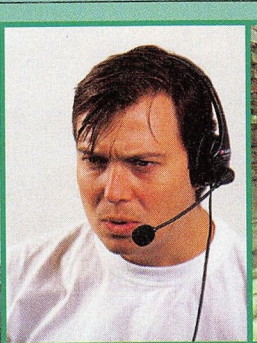
# NGN net game news

Keep face in Cyberspace

## DirectX 8 - DirectPlay Voice

Taking online voice communication to the next level.







At the recent Australian Game Developer's Conference in Sydney, Microsoft Games evangelist Andrew Walker previewed the DirectPlay voice function supported by DirectX 8.

Microsoft have incorporated three different sizes of low-end voice codecs for their Application Programming Interface (API) and are looking at a fourth, larger one for use where voice quality is more important. Walker said the codecs gave programmers the flexibility to use voice chat without blowing out the required bandwidth for their games.

An online card game of bridge for example, requires little bandwidth and so a larger voice codec can be used to communicate with team members. A squad based first-person shooter, like Team Fortress 2, would probably use one of the smaller codecs. Walker predicted that as broadband and cable modems become more popular, more interesting things will be done with voice chat within games.

The API already supports some new features - for example, where team communication might only be possible when characters are within range. Some developers at the conference suggested that more interesting things could be done the technology - with radio communications within a game, getting hold of an enemy team's radio would enable you to listen into their communication and acquire sensitive information.

With DirectX being almost universally supported among game developers we can hopefully expect to see more games supporting online voice chat with the release of DirectX 8 later this year.

*Elton Cane*

## NGN *The Rumour Mill*

*Note - sprinkle a bit of salt before digesting the following contents:

• **Could it be that LucasArts and Verant Interactive** (developers of the ORPG EverQuest and Multiplayer RTS game Sovereign) are negotiating the terms of a massively multiplayer online game set in the Star Wars universe (circa The Phantom Menace)?

Popular speculation suggests that it is to be a multi-tiered experience, featuring RTS, RPG and space shooter elements. Wookies, however, may not be included.

Possible source of information: a friend of a friend of someone who overheard a discussion over at the drinking fountain on the "inside".

• **Squaresoft - developers of fantasy RPG smash series Final Fantasy** - have apparently been exploring the potential of a multiplayer RPG.

"In terms of networking games, I believe entities creating Ultima Online and EverQuest are advanced at this time. But Square has already started research on a server-type online game. Within six months, I believe we will be able to have the same level of technology," says head of Squaresoft Hironobu Sakaguchi.

No word yet which of their games will serve as the basis for the project, though we'll put our money on Final Fantasy.

• **Looking Glass Studios have hinted at their next project.** Tentatively titled "Thief 3 Arena", the third in LG's groundbreaking first person action series is set to be a multiplayer only affair.

With multiplayer now pulled from Thief 2: The Metal Age (this feature was also set to appear in Thief: The Dark Project) and the rather vocal response from the online community displeased with the decision, LG have acknowledged that multiplayer Thief has a lot of potential.

Obviously. One question, however, remains. What kind of multiplayer do LG have in mind? Co-operative thieving or a more straightforward deathmatch experience? Or both? Either way, the project will produce some intriguing design decisions. Just how would you do Thief deathmatch and retain the spirit of the original game?

SPECIAL

# NGN Poll

Email your responses to **ngn@pcpowerplay.next.com.au**, with "NGN Poll" in the subject line. Results to be published in #47.




In #43 we asked "**Based on the test versions of both Unreal Tournament and Quake 3 Arena, which of the two games are you most looking forward to?**"

And we were swamped with responses. Never before we had such a broad spectrum of opinions on these two games. While many declared their love for one and their utter distaste with the other, a significant portion were enamoured with both. One thing's certain: at this stage - there's no clear favourite. There are just as many Quake 3 Arena fanatics as there are Unreal Tournament ones.

## Polished Unreal

Definitely Q3A. To me UT is a great game, but really looks like a polished Unreal. Whereas Q3A looks new and exciting - a long way from the days of Q2. I am waiting with bated breath for Q3A.

**Aj, Internet**

## UT Canes

Unreal Tournament canes Quake 3 Arena - give me Enforcers any day!

**Kaiser SV, Internet**

## Deathmatch my brother

I look forward to both Q3A and UT. Since I've started participating in regular LAN Q3A deathmatches in the iMac centres at my university, it has rekindled my love for FPS games, which to me were getting rather boring for a while. I now deathmatch my brother at home at both Q3A and UT and I find both to be a challenging playing field. They each have different styles of play, even though they're both FPS. Q3A is more strategic due to balanced weapons while UT is pure gore fest. I say bring on both and let the good times roll!

**Ryan "Mugsy" Ly, Internet**

## Q3A for dead

Unreal Tournament leaves Q3A for dead. Hey don't get me wrong - Q3 is a great game in itself but compared to UT, it's not even close. Why I don't like Quake 3 Arena:

1) The Machinegun. You fire and you keep on firing you're locked on but no effect. GREAT gun, not.

2) The Rocket Launcher. All smoke and no bang. Try UT's launcher load up 6 rockets and let em fly.

3) The Rail Gun. Oop's, missed. Oop's missed again. Stand still so I can shoot you!

4) It looks like Q1, plays like Q2. Hey it must be Q3! Go the innovation, boys.

5) You know those little French cars with the really annoying horn? Sounds like you're scoring a hit their ID.

6) All the weapons have one firing mode, which is really frustrating when switching back from UT for a slow change.

It seems someone else has fragged id at its own game

**Matthew "McDeath" Attwater**

## Sick of playing Quake

Personally, I lean toward Unreal Tourney. Sure it has hefty requirements - just like a rocket needs rocket fuel. Quake3 Arena runs smoothly at 1024*768 with the graphics settings maxed out on my AMDK62 400/Voodoo Banshee rig, and I achieve silky gameplay at a ping of 350 and below on the web. Unreal Tournament, I run at 800*600 with the world textures and skin details slashed to medium and it struggles to achieve smooth (read possible) play at 300ms. And though I am downloading the latest version of the Q3A Test as I write and therefore have not encountered the latest gen Quakebots, I must say, The AI in UT is exceptional and extremely challenging.

The reason I lean toward UT is that it looks sensational and the map design is great and maybe, I am just sick of playing Quake.

**Shaun Fuller, Internet**

# PATCH NEWS

**Patches included on this month's CD PowerPlay:**
**Abomination 2.6.4**
**Age Of Wonders 1.1**
**Drakan 4.44**
**Freespace 2 v1.20**
**Homeworld v1.04**
**Indy Jones Infernal Machine**
**Rogue Spear 2.05**
**Soul Reaver 1.2**
**Spec Ops 2 v1.1.1**
**Ultima IX Ascension v1.05f**

**Rainbow Six: Rogue Spear Patch -v2.05**

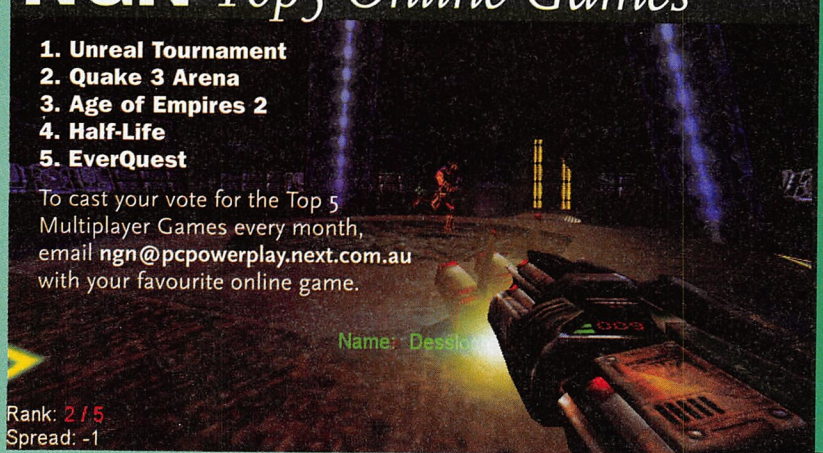
- Found and eliminated some bandwidth hogs in multiplayer.
- Fixed the pink areas and bad text on Permedia 2 cards.
- Fixed the crash when playing back a replay that was recorded with AutoRun turned on.
- Fixed a potential lockup if a player jumps off a ledge while AIs are following.
- The "Invert" option on the joystick remapping screen should work correctly now.
- Fixed auto-aim being turned on when the player attempts to switch teams during the early stages of a death motion.
- Players who join while a game is ongoing no longer send their armpatches immediately but rather wait for the next game to start. This fixes the problem of players joining during the action causing a lag for everyone.
- Added a new multiplayer only map called "Bunkers".
- Fixed the short freeze that occurred when selecting "Mission Orders" from the briefing screen.
- Replaced "Ready To Continue" messages on multiplayer results screens with ready indicator in player list.
- Server can force the game to continue past the results screen after a multiplayer game instead of waiting for all players to click continue by pressing the forward arrow a second time.
- Disable the observer mode key when running a replay.
- Kick out terrorists in

▶

# NGN Top5 Online Games

1. **Unreal Tournament**
2. **Quake 3 Arena**
3. **Age of Empires 2**
4. **Half-Life**
5. **EverQuest**

To cast your vote for the Top 5 Multiplayer Games every month, email **ngn@pcpowerplay.next.com.au** with your favourite online game.




## Massively Multiplayer Strategy

First it was RPGs, but now developers have caught on to the idea that commanding an army in a persistent game world against hundreds (if not thousands) of other players could be more than just a bit of fun.

Think about an online game world where the territory you won in a recent battle may be assaulted by a different nemesis tomorrow. Throw in some diplomacy - say, form alliance and attack a rather prosperous faction or organise trade sanctions on poorer factions - and you've got yourself a truly dynamic battlefield where long term survival is far more important than a mere skirmish on the battlefield.

The potential is phenomenal. So this month we ask: "**How interested are you in a persistent massively multiplayer strategy game?**"

Email your responses to **ngn@pcpowerplay.next.com.au**, with "NGN Poll" in the subject line. Results to be published in #47.

## PATCH NEWS

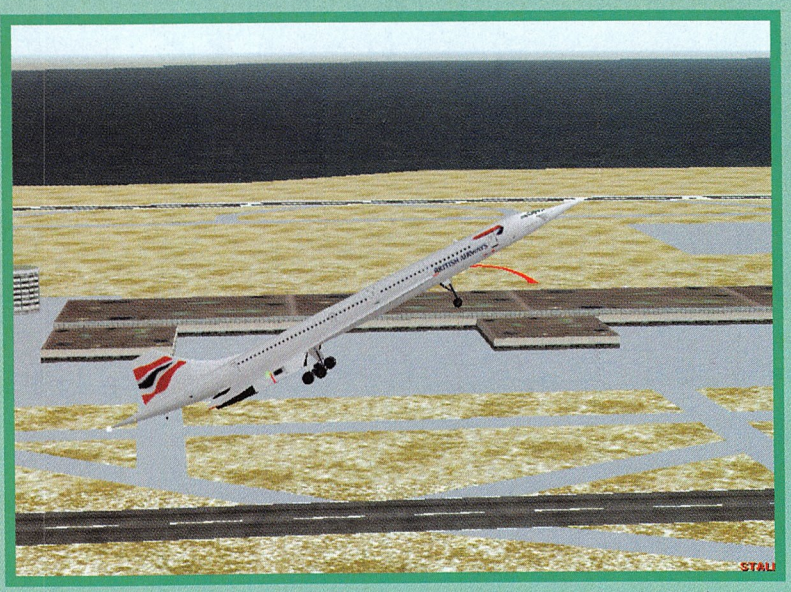
► terrorist hunt / lone wolf farther if they are in the same room as the insertion zone / base. If they are in a different room, they can be anywhere. This reduces the incidents of terrorists starting off right in the team's face.
• Adjusted which weapon skill was used at what zooms. Full submachinegun zoom now uses full assault skill, instead of using a bit of sniper skill.
• AIs will now call "Clear!" once they have cleared a room.
• Changed the Steyr AUG to use the rifle reticule to stop confusing players.
• Removed the intermediate zoom level on the G36K.
• Changed the "if you are zoomed, you can only walk" to be "if you are zoomed more than an MP-5 can zoom, you can only walk". This is 3X.
• Loosened some of the server-side gunshot validation checks to lessen the penalties for high-ping players.
• Improvements to the camera code to eliminate some cases of the camera being outside of the world after dying.
• Added support for Creative's EAX.DLL so more players can get EAX effects.
• Improved the support for foreign keyboards in the remapping screen by detecting keys that are in a different location from a US keyboard.
• The forced time delay between trigger pulls is no longer increased if you are wounded.
• Character scaling in the X and Z directions is now capped between 0.1 and 1.0 to avoid a cheat that allowed players to run faster than they should.
• The Rommel.CXP file now goes through the mod system properly so it can be edited as part of a mod.
• Fixed some bad character models in the Train Yard Lone Wolf and Terrorist Hunt missions.
• Changed default player selection on multiplayer results screens to be local player instead of first player.
• Updated formatting and contents of multiplayer RSResults•.log files.
• Added an option to RSConfig to force fullscreen and run DXDiag. Added some system information.
• Reduced problems with flashing during loading sequences.
• Loading screens will continue to animate while waiting for others to finish their loads instead of stopping the animation and appearing to freeze the system.
• Multiplayer games will not start in cooperative multiplay until all active and observer players have finished loading.
• Disconnecting users in a multiplayer game will no longer alert terrorists with a death noise.
• Server locks the game temporarily during the ►

# NGN - MS Flight Sim 2000

by Ed Fox

Less talked about - but with just as large a following as the first-person shooter genre - is the world of the flight simulator online. Granted, not all flight sims are capable of online/LAN playability, however they make up for this omission of multiplayer capability with a staggering number of web sites dedicated to each and every sim. And undoubtedly the most popular sim out there is Microsoft's Flight Simulator 2000, with already massive support online.

It's responsible for a staggering 10,000+ web pages of every shape and size being dedicated to thing. Jump online via The Zone and match wits with other pilots world-wide, sign on with one of the numerous virtual airlines or simply download your favourite aircraft from the thousands available. The sites listed below are considered the cream of the crop by the MS Flight Simulator community and contain all the resources you could ever want to not only get up and down in one piece, but better enjoy the bits in between.






### THE SIMFLIGHT NETWORK

**www.simflight.com**

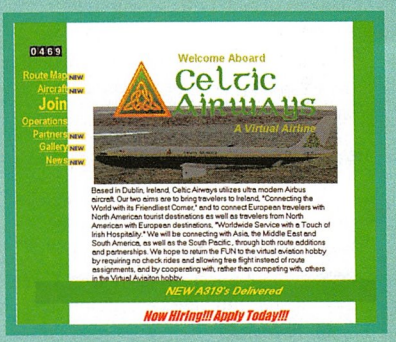
Put simply, this is first site any flight simulator enthusiast should check out. The SimFlight Network is a jumping point to any one of over a hundred flight simulator 2000 related resources. Check out the online PC Pilot magazine for all the latest news in the industry, or simply browse the FS2000 Resource Centre containing all the tips, tricks and info you'll ever need. This site is quite clearly the most comprehensive FS2000 site out there.




### FSPLANET.COM

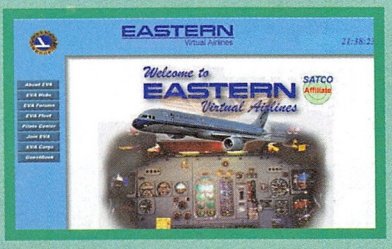
**www.fsplanet.com**

FSPlanet sports the largest collections of flight simulator downloads anywhere. Search through the thousands of available aircraft or update that bland scenery with a fresh new user-created module. The quality of the work ranges from "just okay" to "bloody fantastic!", and all downloads are completely free of charge.




### Celtic Airways

**www.geocities.com/CapeCanaveral/Hangar/3989/**




### Eastern Virtual Airlines

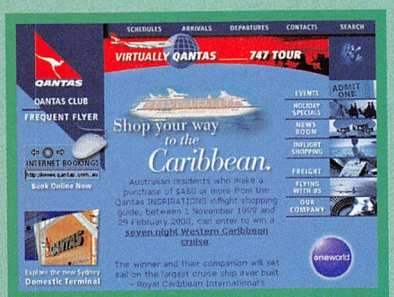
**www.evair.com**




### SIMMARKET.COM

**www.simmarket.com**

Another outstanding effort, however geared more towards the virtual pilot with some money to burn, this site offers the most complete list of commercial flight simulator add-ons ever. Design your own airports and scenery with ASD or grab a copy of Flight Manager - the ultimate tool for navigation around the globe.
However, for a real buzz, get yourself the "Rock'n'Ride" personal motion simulator, a sit-in cockpit designed to emulate the roll and pitch of your aircraft as you fly!



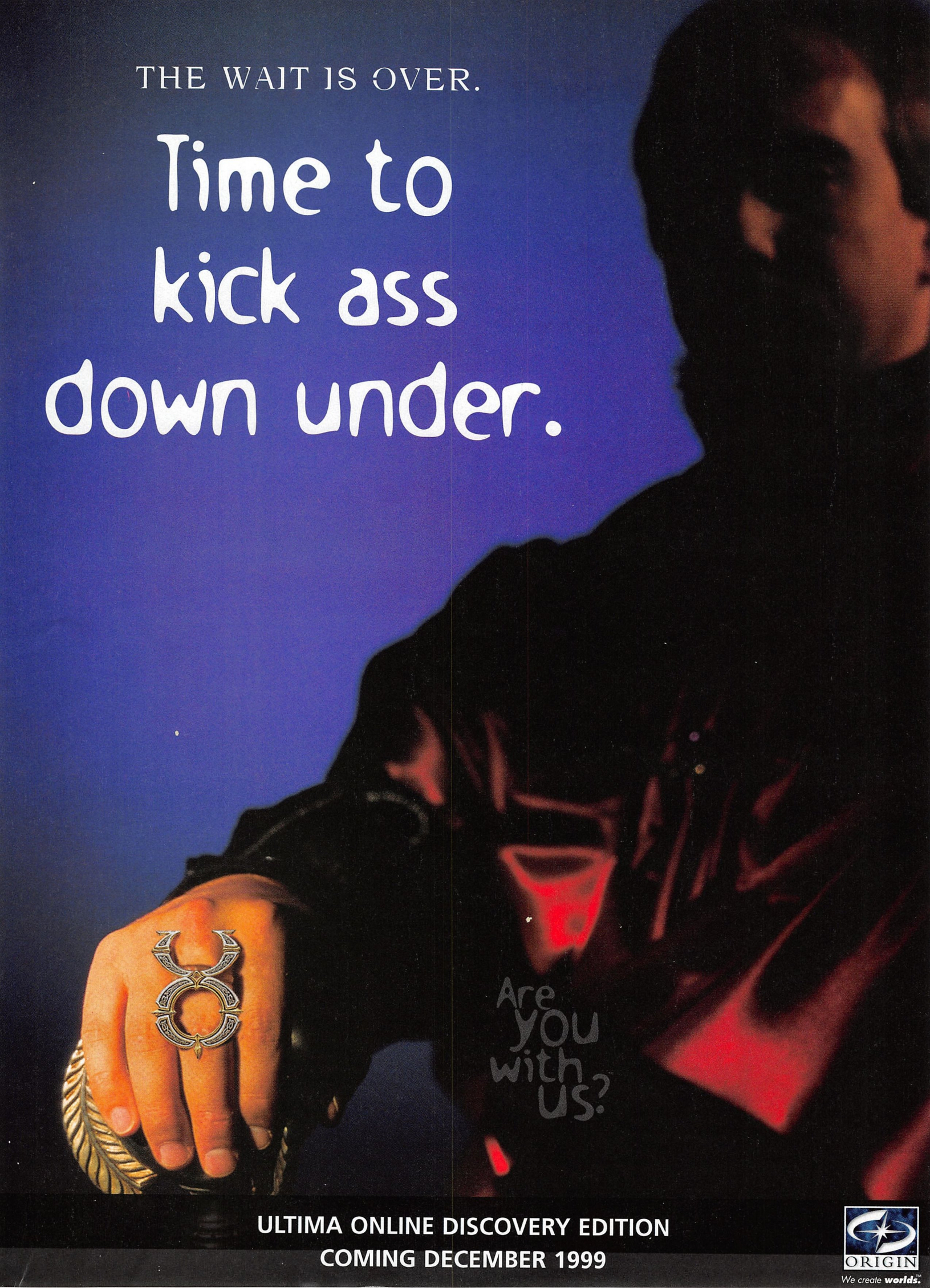

### VIRTUAL AIRLINES

Virtual Airlines are exactly that! An organised air freight service that transports anything from virtual passengers to virtual cargo. For the extreme flight sim enthusiast, wanting a little purpose during those long Sydney to Tokyo flights you can't look past the monumental Virtual Airline following.




### Voyager Airline Holdings

**www.voyagerairlines.com**


THE WAIT IS OVER.
Time to kick ass down under.
Are you with us?
ULTIMA ONLINE DISCOVERY EDITION
COMING DECEMBER 1999
ORIGIN
We create worlds.™

## PATCH NEWS

▶ countdown sequence to prevent other users from joining and halting the game start.
• Fixed a number of problems with text being truncated or cut off improperly.
• Custom armpatches no longer show up on some terrorists in multiplayer terrorist hunt missions.
• Fixed problem with some characters causing the truncation of the rest of the string (most common with higher ascii, accented characters).
• Ten lines of chat are now allowed.
• Chat will now wrap if it is longer than the width of the screen.
• Eliminated "ghost" Rogue Spear task on taskbar when you quit game.
• Fixed the body armor assigned to certain terrorists.
• Made some cosmetic adjustments to the rangefinder portion of the binocular reticule.

**Ultima IX Ascension Patch version 1.05F**
Additional Notes:
- If you find you get stuck after casting a spell, hit the ESC key. The spell has probably not found a target and is waiting in spell targeting mode.
- If you pressed Alt-Tab while in the game it could crash on some systems. Alt-Tab has been locked out. However, on occasion it will still cause a crash. We recommend that you do not run any other programs while running Ultima IX.
- If you have Norton Utilities and uninstall Ultima IX: Ascension, make sure you right click on your Recycle Bin and select Empty Norton Protected Files to free up the space on your hard drive as Norton makes a backup of any deleted files.

**What is Fixed in the Patch (1.05f):**
- Further optimization of the Direct3D support.
- Fixed an issue where the Detonator 3.53 drivers were not working properly with the game.
- Addressed a problem with the Riva 128 and Intel I740 with certain drivers and DirectX 7.
- At times, monsters would not be properly hostile to the Avatar. Many of these situations have been addressed.
- There was an issue where the fire arrows would not fire when using the most common oil flasks in the game.
- If you had your bow drawn and then opened your backpack, the arrow count would read 1, regardless of the actual count.
- If you jumped in water twice in specific situations would cause the Avatar to lock up. This is fixed. ▶

# NGN - Action News

by Elih Brading

Goldeneye 007 Half-Life mod • John Carmack speaks on the final release of Quake III Arena • Name Maker Studio • Cyberathelete Professional League • Unreal DM maps in UT

## Q3A Corner

Carmack's happy. With the release of Q3A, he's updated his .plan file with the following statement:

"Ahhhh.... I am very happy with how Q3 turned out. Probably more than any game we have done before, it's final form was very close to its initial envisioning.

I will be getting all the Q3 code we are going to release together over the next week or so. I will write some overview documentation to give a little context, and since you can do game mods without needing a commercial compiler now, I will write a brief step-by-step to modifying the game code. I'm looking forward to what comes out of the community with Q3."

Although Carmack offered no suggestion on exactly what their next project will be, he is starting work on some new rendering technologies and is continuing to support the shape of Q3A in the form of patches and other such in-game features. One would think that id Software will wait to see how well the initial 1,000,000 copies of Q3A sell before making the choice to focus on multiplayer or revert back to singleplayer.



## Gaming At Golf Prize Money

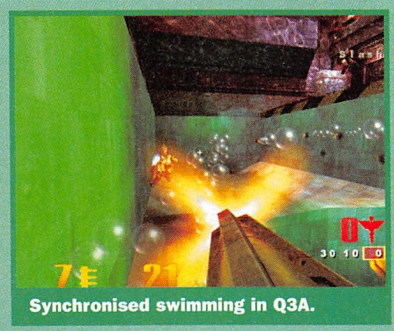
The largest cash prize ever for a computer gaming tournament has been announced for the next Cyberathlete Professional League (CPL) event. The prize money for the Razer-CPL Championship is said to lie at $100, 000 US, with the first place winner receiving $40, 000 US.

The championship has been scheduled to commence in March 2000.

"This is the biggest event of its kind in the history of the sport," announced Robert Krakoff, general manager of Razer, a gaming peripheral company.

The tournament is estimated to attract as many as 1,500 people from all over the globe, with LAN support for 1,000 machines. The one-on-one tournament will allow 512 people to compete in a four-day slaughter fest for cash prizes totalling $100,000 US.

Though the exact location and date of the event was unavailable at the time of writing, the registration site can be viewed at http://www.razercpl.com/. Start practicing now!



Synchronised swimming in Q3A.

## Unreal Reverting Back...

For those of you wanting to play some of the older style DM maps, Epic's Steven Polge updated the Unreal Technology page revealing how to use Unreal maps in Unreal Tournament. The man himself explains it best:

"Unreal I content is automatically replaced by Unreal Tournament content if you run an Unreal I DM map with one

# NGN *Mod of the Month*

## Goldeneye

**Game Type:** Half-Life
**Mod Name:** Goldeneye 007
**Mod Type:** Conversion
**Website:** http://www.halflife.net/goldeneye/
**Expected Release Date:** 1st Qtr. 2000 (beta version)

One of the biggest selling titles for the Nintendo 64 meets Half-Life in this extraordinary 007 multiplayer-only conversion. Though unreleased at the time of writing, developers are nearing release of their public beta version of the game. The title has been in development for some time now - it's delay understandable considering that it aims to be an almost exact port of Rare Software's N64 masterpiece.

Featuring most of the DM maps from the original such as Temple and Library, player models such as Oddjob and Natalya and expansive collection of real-world weaponry, Goldeneye Half-Life looks to be a polished product indeed.

Although there are no plans to implement any true singleplayer characteristics, the conversion will feature a comprehensive bot system to school your position as a deathmatch agent.



# NGN *Map of the Month*

## DMUnsure

### Unreal Tournament

**Map Type:** Urban Deathmatch
**Recommended Bot Skill Level:** Adept

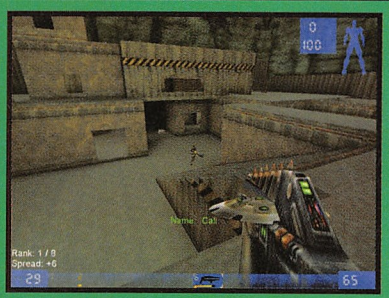
DMUnsure, designed by Steve Keene, was one of the first five maps released for Unreal Tournament. Sporting a heavy "city" like influence and beautiful weapon placement, Unsure plays best with 4-7 opponents.

The map provides a platform for some Action Quake2 style roof-to-roof combat, with plenty of sniper-points on the upper platforms and an abundance of tight corridors on the base level that are perfect for the flak-cannon and rocket launcher.

The map is surrounded by steep cliffs and an ever-evasive thunderstorm that passes overhead, adding atmosphere to the arena. The soundtrack supports a fast and frantic game in which the key to survival is to never stand still. DMUnsure flows with the feel of UT, and supports a variety of gamestyles to suit each individual player - a map to must be added to your collection.

DMUnsure can be found on this month's CD PowerPlay #2.







of the Unreal Tournament gametypes. However, we recommend that you manually replace the Unreal I inventory items in your level with their UT equivalents and release an updated version of the map. Otherwise, both the Unreal I and UT versions will be loaded on the content, which will cause swapping on clients with low amounts of memory."

For those of you who do not own a copy of Unreal, this may give you the chance to play some of the old school maps with some more mature weaponry...



**UT also allows you to play the Unreal DM maps.**

## Gaming Gadget Of The Month

**Name:** Name Maker Studio
**Game Type:** Quake3: Arena, QuakeWorld, ASCII Mode, QuakeWorld MODs, Quake2, and Hexen II.
**Category:** Visual Enhancer
**URL:** *http://nms.quakecity.net/*

Name maker studio is a free tool used to modify the visual appearance of the name for your player in a number of multiplayer games. It adds custom colours, characters and effects to your name, and can be used to set you apart from the pack by giving you a bright, vibrant edge.

Using a simple what-you-see-is-what-you-get type interface, NMS makes it simple to add effects and animation to your name. Be careful not to overdo it though - there's a fine line between being classy and downright annoying.

Name Maker Studio can be found on this month's CD PowerPlay #2.

# NGN *Game Master*

Email **gm@pcpowerplay.next.com.au**, generously with any online/multiplayer related questions.

**Don't know the difference between a modem and a blender? Can't make sense of the setup ritual usually associated with playing online? Just ask Elih - NGN's resident Game Master.**

## Q3A - Little Icons

Q. I've recently downloaded the Q3A Demo Test and I can't wait to pick up the full game! I have one question, what do the little icons that show up when the announcer says "excellent!" mean?

**Jubbs, Internet**

Those symbols are referred to as "medals" in Q3A and are awarded when the following criteria are met:

**Medal: Accuracy -** The accuracy award is presented at the end of the match to contestants who play with greater than 50% shot accuracy.

**Medal: Excellent -** The excellent medal is awarded when you frag two opponents within four seconds of each other.

**Medal: Frags -** The frags honour is presented after each 100 kills earned.

**Medal: Gauntlet -** The gauntlet icon is displayed each time you fist an opponent to death. Fill your screen with these beasties and it means that a) your opponents suck, or b) you could beat Mike Tyson in the ring.

**Medal: Impressive -** The impressive tally is awarded for every two successive railgun shots. It isn't particularly hard, really...

**Medal: Victory** The victory tag is awarded to the winner of a match who completes the arena without a death or suicide.

# PATCH NEWS

- The zoom reset key (ctrl-insert) has been fixed.
- Addressed a crash that can occur if you save the game while poisoned then load that game and try to continue.
- If you place an item between the compass and backpack the game would sometimes crash.
- When manipulating bags there was a random lockup that could occur.
- If you dragged a bag while the bag gump was open you could have interface troubles. This was addressed.
- Fixed an issue if the Spellbook was placed in a bag, it was not being added to the interface.
- The duration of spells (which have a duration) cast from scrolls has been increased.
- The Day spell has been adjusted so that it will not temporarily blink out in certain situations.
- The Time Stop spell mana drain has been increased dramatically to reduce the balance issues generated by the spell.
- Fixed a problem where you could manipulate some items while in the Wizard Eye view.
- Fixed a problem where linear spells cost mana if you have the Arms of the Magi on.
- Arms of the Magi will check to see you have enough mana based upon the reduced spell cost rather than the standard spell cost.
- Addressed a balance issue where you could cast spells while the backpack was open. By design, monsters are non-hostile when a container gump (backpack, bag) is open meaning they had no way to respond to your spell/attack. Now when you cast a spell while the backpack or bag is open, they will be closed so the monsters may respond. Additionally, quick targeting is now disabled when the backpack or bag is open.
- Fixed an issue where Rupert the blacksmith (in Trinsic) would not always recognize that you had blackrock and thus will not make a Blackrock sword for you.
- We found and fixed several areas where Raven would provide incorrect conversation options.
- Added an option to have Raxos give you the key to Nico's cell after the Shrine of Sacrifice is cleansed. You no longer have to kill the repentant man to free Nico.
- You no longer have the option to ask Lord British about the shortcut to Yew once he has shown it to you.
- The speech for the two drinking skeletons near Britain is now playing (the text was only displaying before).
- Eustus would not speak to you if you clicked on him. Thus you had to walk away and approach again if you did not answer his questions. Note: he still no longer has anything to say once you have received

## PATCH NEWS

▶ the Quill of Justice. This is as we designed it.
- Fixed a few areas that were not playing the correct city music.
- The text for the Blackthorn note was too long for the scroll it was on and thus you could not read the entire thing. The scroll has been extended.
- Groldek (the evil Archmage in Serpent's Hold) was not casting his spells correctly and would try to walk forward off his platform. He now cast the proper spells and stays put.
- Addressed an issue where two characters would rush each other in an in-game cinematic (while using their magic). They now stand still.
- Fixed a problem in Despise where you would get a Karma hit even if you saved Thadious (should only do so if you let him die).
- Fixed a problem with the blacksmiths where they were not offering any money for the blackrock sword.
- Fixed some incorrect labels in the Minoc vendors (e.g. said "Dozen Oil Flasks" when it would only sell you one.)
- Fixed a problem in the Abyss where the fireballs would be left behind in the hall, preventing progress later.
- There were times when the small rowboat that sailed you to the secret entrance of Wrong would not show up. Made this more reliable.
- Fixed an issue where the secret cave from Buccaneer's Den to New Magincia would open the false path when you tried to travel from Buccaneer's Den a second time.
- There was a point northwest of Yew that would sometimes get stuck repeating the same sound over and over. This has been addressed.

There are a few items that will only be reflected if you install the patch before you reach a certain point in the game. Note that these fixes are less critical to your gaming enjoyment (the game still works, we just improved upon a few things) and you are not required to start over. The patch will still fix the issues listed above regardless of how much you've played.
- Made the trigger bricks in Wrong easier to see. If you install the patch before entering the prison of Wrong you will see this change.
- In the Terfin dungeon the game would sometimes crash if you placed all of the black gate pieces in the circle too quickly. Cleaned this up so it works properly in all situations. If you install the patch before you enter the Terfin dungeon you will see this change.
- Created a way for you to keep the Mage Shield once you've found it. If you install the patch before you arrive in Britannia you will see this change. ▶

# NGN - Online RPG News

by Lindsey Smith

# 5 ONLINE RPGS TO WATCH FOR IN 2000



Quirky and wonderful - Atriarch.

Massively multiplayer online role playing games are maturing at a cracking pace. Lindsey Smith previews a handful of ORPGs that are set to ignite the genre in the new millennium.

## Ultima Online 2

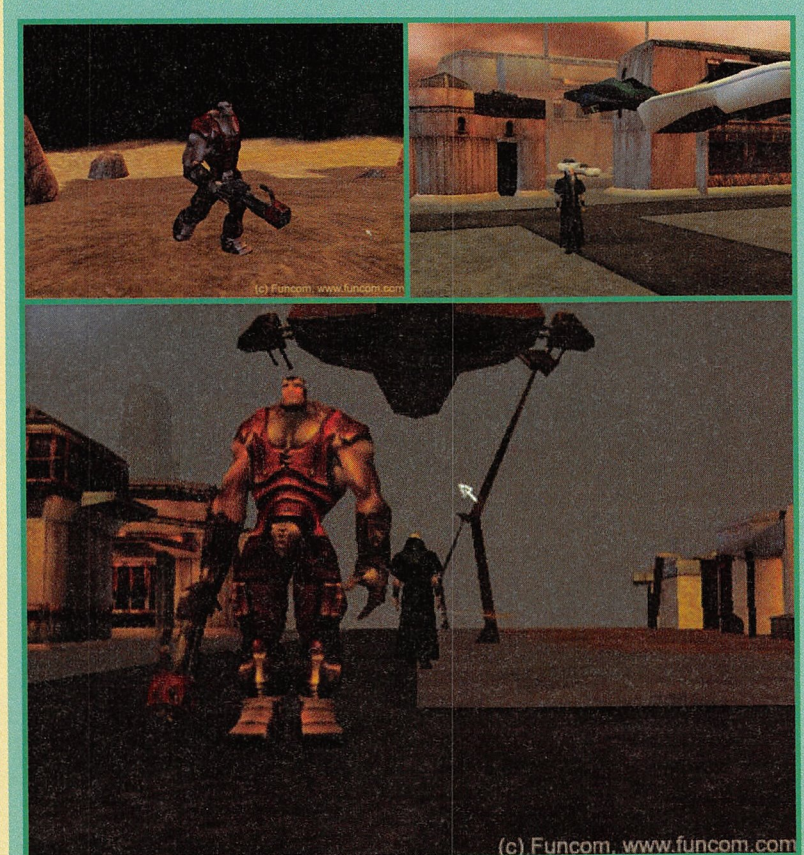
**http://www.uo2.com**

Ultima Online 2 is the sequel to what many believe is the greatest MMORPG ever created: Ultima Online. UO2 should port all of the features that made UO so good into a lush 3D world, rich for exploration. Not much is known about UO2 at the moment, but what is known is that it has been in development since late 1998. What little information that can be gleaned from the website points towards a non-fantasy technological aspect in UO2. It'll be extremely interesting to see how the UO2 development team integrate this technology into the well-established Ultima world.

## Atriarch

**http://www.atriarch.com**

Atriarch developers World Fusion have decided to step outside the traditional fantasy genre that most MMORPG developers stick to, and deliver something decidedly different. Set in the sci-fi world of Atriana, Atriarch looks to bring some well-needed variation to the fantasy rich MMORPG world. It's slated for release later this year. Takes our pick for the most interesting looking ORPG currently in development.




Anarchy Online - savage and brutal.

## Angel Hill

**http://www.angelhill.net**

Even though Angel Hill's release date isn't till about Spring 2001, that hasn't stopped it hitting out list. Developed by a new and previously unheard of company, Perplexian Creations, this Sci-Fi-Cyberpunk adventure looks to break some new ground in ORPGs. It's set in 3000AD on the mining moon of Angel Hill, a bleak desolate world rich with minerals. Not much is known about this game at this stage, save that it'll feature a complex political system and rich history for players to get into. And it looks an absolute treat!

## Anarchy Online

**http://www.anarchy-online.com**

Another game that is attempting to break the fantasy bonds tied to MMORPGS is Anarchy Online, developed by FunCom (gotta love the name!). It is set 30,000 years into the future, on the conflict ridden world of Rubi-Ka, an outpost colony on the outer rim of the Milky Way. AO has a distinct techno-rebel feel about it, with rebel clans fighting for their freedom under their oppressive government, Omni-Tek. Plenty of work has been put into the background side of this game, with the website chock-full of text describing everything from the current political system, to the various life forms which inhabit the giant craters of the Rubi-Ka

The defence of castles and forts plays a vital role in Shadowbane's strategic gameplay.




deserts. Anarchy Online is looking very promising indeed.

## Shadowbane

**http://www.shadowbane.com**

Rejoice, for the holy grail of player versus player combat is upon us. The main - nay, only - aim of this game is to kill your fellow players, perfectly embodied in the slogan on the Shadowbane banner ad "I don't play games to bake bread, I play them to crush" (an obvious jab at other ORPG's more mundane trade skills). This one is being fanatically anticipated by the thousands of blood-hungry players who simply want a balanced playing field for their PvP killing urges. Coupled with the PvP element, Shadowbane features an amazing looking game engine and an in-depth storyline that seems to perfectly complement its PvP slant. This should prevent the game from being a purely "deathmatch-with-dragons" type of affair.

However, the developers aren't simply providing a deathmatch experience in a fantasy setting. Shadowbane can be best described as an ORPG with a much heavier slant on player vs. player combat. More interesting is the news that developers plan to include a strategic element to the proceedings. Players will be able to create factions, defend castles, and use tactical formations in combat. Combining this with a focus on the aggressive expansion of territories, Shadowbane is set to take the ORPG community by storm.

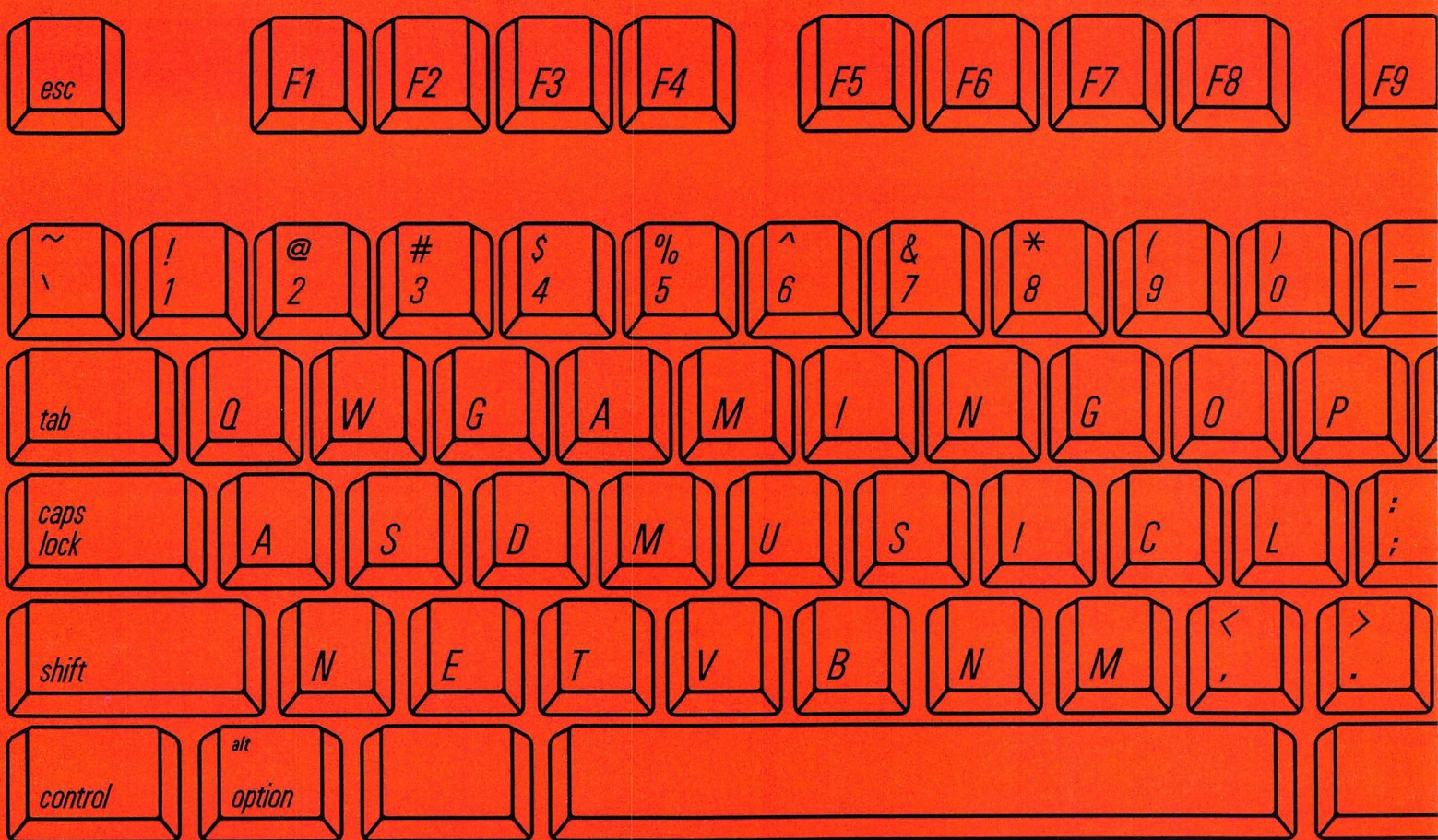



Shadowbane features tactical combat somewhat reminiscent of BAK.

# PATCH NEWS

**Installation Tips**

1. While playing Ascension, the file treedat.flx is sometimes being modified, which halts the patching process because it is looking for the original version of treedat.flx. To fix this, take these steps:
a. If you run the patch from the command line, use the command line:
U9PATCH -ignoremissing
b. If you run the patch by double-clicking on its icon: Right-click on the icon and select Properties.
On the command line (also called "Target"), add -ignoremissing at the end.
2. If you are using a D3D video card other than the S3 (Savage) cards and have installed the game using compressed textures, you will need to turn off compressed textures. You can turn compressed textures off through the Hardware Options Program located under the start menu in the Origin Systems\Ultima IX section. The compressed textures will run Ascension faster under the Savage cards only. Some GeForce cards will run with the compressed textures, but will run faster without them.
3. The patch will not install if you are running a cracked version of Ascension. If you have installed any kind of cracked version, you will need to reinstall the original game in order to use the patch.
4. Reinstalling the game should not affect your saved games. They will remain in the saved game folder of your Ascension directory.
5. Once you've installed it, you can ensure that the patch installed correctly by opening your journal in the game and checking the version number in the upper right corner. If the installation was successful, this should read 1.05, rather than 1.03.


esc
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@ 2
# 3
$ 4
% 5
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& 7
* 8
( 9
) 0
tab
Q
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caps lock
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control
alt
option


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F13
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F15
+
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delete
ins
help
home
page
up
num
lock
clear
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COMING SOON.

# IN-BOX

Letters Tip #6: 2000 word letters just won't cut. Keep them succinct.

**WRITE TO: PC PowerPlay Letters, Level 6, 418A Elizabeth St, Surry Hills, NSW 2010. letters@pcpowerplay.next.com.au**

## Byte Size

Great magazine everyone. If I was a girlie magazine I'd marry PC PowerPlay!
Oh what a match!
**Mal Ewing, Redcliffe QLD**

## Christian To Spread

How about a little Christmas cheer in your December issue? It's the Superduper Holiday Christmas season mag and what do we get? A mag full of half-naked women. Yeah, great one guys, good to see you have your principles the right way around... NOT. You know, you don't have to be a Christian to spread a little Christmas joy around! Same thing happened last year. What's up with that?

**Jason Elgenia, Email**

*Um, we forgot. Hope you'll understand, though, that it's tough to really get into the festive spirit in early October. We don't work in a department store, you know.*

## Microsoft Stuffed

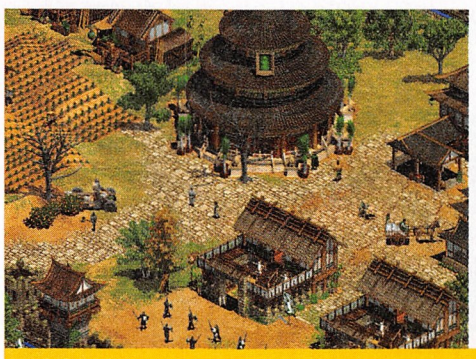
I can't believe Microsoft stuffed up their magnificent Age of Empires II with this terrible error: if you want to overwrite a saved game, it pops up with the message "That already file exists. Overwrite?" I mean, that is a pretty bad grammatical stuff up.

**Petbird, Email**

*Anyone else spotted glaring grammatical mistakes in games? Write in and tell us now!*

## Please Their Customers

Too often we find ourselves disappointed by something or someone NOT delivering what they proposed and justifiably bagging them for it. Today I'd like to do the reverse by saying thanks to two groups that have done their job and done it very well.





**Age of Empires II - grammar may be a little off but the units speak in their native tongue!**

Praise Part One. Since PCPP#2 I've been an avid fan of PCPP, a magazine that has improved with age. I've enjoyed your informative and entertaining M.O. in delivering the latest and greatest (and of course the NOT SO GREAT) info to gamers of the local market with a local flavour. This makes your mag so much easier to identify with, as opposed to UK and US mags. Keep up the great work guys and girls.

Praise Part Two. In one of your issues you brought to my attention the Blaster PC. For this I am indebted to you, as I have recently purchased one of these awesome machines and I would like to say that Creative knows how to please their customers. Their prompt and accurate assembly, delivery date, standard of finish, documentation and the GRUNT of the machine exceeds all my expectations. It's early days yet and I've not needed after sale assistance of any kind (in itself a good thing), but I can tell you that the Blaster is Master in my book. Thanks to Creative and thanks to PCPP.

**Mike Reinfeld, Email**

*Oh, Mike, you are just so full of love. Group hug!*

## Shut Your Hole

Okay, just to settle the <word censored> (*That was self-censored, by the way - Ed*) score Matthew, the only reason why I lost to you in Tiberian Sun was that I accidentally sold my War Factory when I was supposed to sell my Tiberian Refinery. Okay, so shut your hole before I shove something down it.

**Kronz, NZ**

*Let us get this straight: you're saying you lost a multiplayer game of Tiberian Sun because you were crap. Correct?*

## We Are Hungry

G'day, fellow PCPowerPlayers and of course you champions there that produce the excellent magazine that keeps us coming back month after month (*Enough with the praise already, it's getting embarrassing - Ed*). I have but one whingeing point and that is regarding the lack of RUGBY LEAGUE GAMES!

Let's see, we have two Rugby Union games

## Byte Size

Just a short one. You guys kick arse.
**Harley McGann, Email**
P.S. Keep kicking arse.
*And yours will be next.*

## JOLT COLA Letter of the Month

A six-pack and Jolt t-shirt for...

### Real Deathmatch Victim

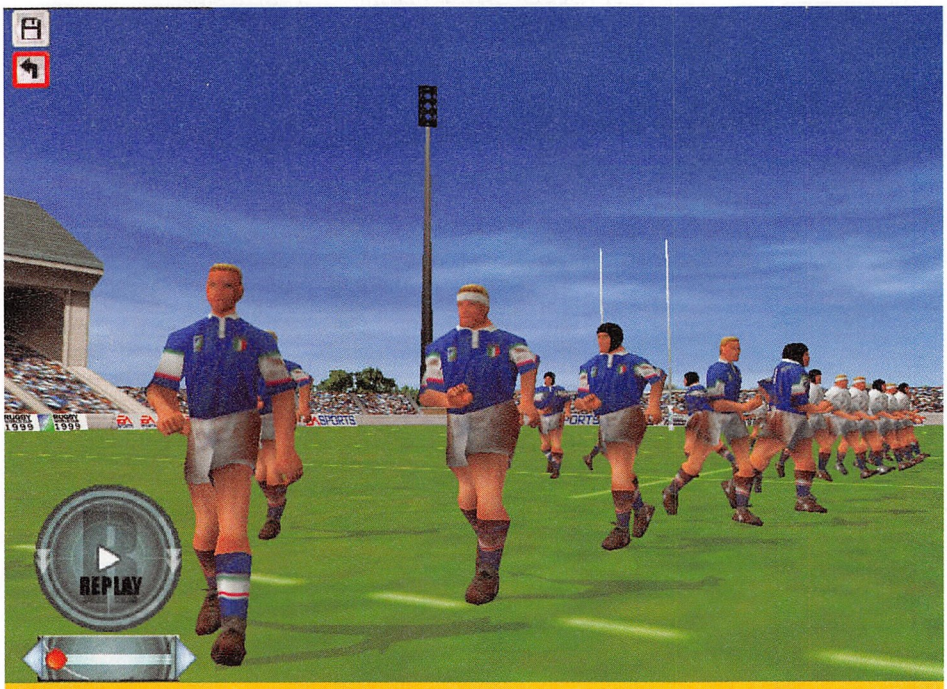
Up until a few moments ago I was a dedicated single player, but (and it's a big but) I just finished not only my first experience of Quake 3: Arena, but my first true multiplayer game. Sure I've used bots before, but the feeling of taking down my first real deathmatch victim is one hell of an adrenaline rush.

Having said that, I don't mean that I'll give up the single player experience, but I had been a little dismissive of multiplayer in the past. My mind is now firmly changed and I urge others who haven't tried it to do so immediately. Even if you don't think you have the talent, you may be surprised.

**Shaft, Email**

*An open-minded gamer is a happy gamer.*






**Rugby Union is on it's way, but still no sign of a League game. Sigh.**

coming, we have had AFL 99 and 2000, Cricket World Cup 99 has been and Cricket 2000 is on the way and, um... we have had ARL 96!

What is doing with the people at EA Sports? ARL 96 was good for its time, but I think that it is past its time now and we are hungry for more. The Super League War is over and the risk is out of the way of not getting buyers. An added English League would attract English buyers, and with the buyers from Australia they would surely make a killing.

It is just getting a little annoying that Aussies cannot get the games they really want and EA Sports keeps sending us these fake Aussie games such as Union and AFL. We want RUGBY LEAGUE!

**Matt, Email**

*As much as we love our league here on the east coast, the reality is that it remains a small slice of the sports market, not just worldwide but in Australia, too. Past Rugby League games simply have not been successful enough to warrant more. Perhaps if they'd been developed from the ground up, rather than slightly altered versions of Rugby Union titles, then they might have done better. EA has recently expanded its local presence, so you might be in luck, Matt.*

## Weeping In Front

I thought it would never happen: a day when PC PowerPlay would raise their prices. Shame on you. All us dedicated fans have stuck with you since the beginning, and this is how we are repaid. And there is no more content than usual, only loads more ads (Hey, we can only play so many games in a month, you know - Ed)! Next year the GST will be in and the price will rise again. Real bright move fellas! I hope you all feel ashamed of yourselves for letting us all down. The Mag of the Year award must have went to your heads! I am sure there will be a lot of weeping in front of the monitor for months, a monitor that has pirate games on the screen, all because the rise in the mag meant that gamers can no longer afford games.

**Grant Steele, Email**

*The price rise is out of our control, we're afraid. We just write the mag. Another way of looking at it - the rise represents one new game every 7.5 years. That's going to cause piracy?*

## Byte Size

Have you ever considered a politically correct mag name? Instead of PC PowerPlay, you could be PersonalComputer ControllingAbility GamingActivity?

**David Scott, La Trobe**

## Hear Our Jaw Drop

I have noticed a disturbing trend in multiplayer games recently, that is the omission of the ability to play modem-to-modem. TA: Kingdoms, Half-Life and Homeworld, for example. Apart from it being an excellent game, the other reason I bought Homeworld is that a friend and I wanted to play against each other modem-to-modem. You could hear our jaw drop (*Are you Siamese twins? - Ed*) when we discovered this was not so upon opening our Homeworld boxes. We didn't want to play over the internet where we depend on some server being up or on either of us not getting disconnected by our ISPs while in the middle of a game. The same applied to TA: Kingdoms and Half-Life. Why did Cavedog leave off the modem-to-modem option when they had it included in Total Annihilation?

Some people may think I am nitpicking, but I prefer to play modem-to-modem when there are just the two of us. Thank god modem-to-modem was still an option in Age of Kings and Tiberian Sun!

**Greg Hunter, Email**

*Westwood/Ensemble 1 - Cavedog/Valve/Relic 0.*

## Feck And Shite

Thanks PC PowerPlay, I don't have to fork out $15 for an old UK mag that keeps spewing out 'modified expletives' like feck and shite. The thing I hated most about one certain UK Mag (let's just say it rhymes with PC Gnome) is their continual Lara worship and every caption an attempt at humour. Now I only have to pay $9.95 for an Australian mag that worships Lara and attempts funny captions (although admittingly some were funny).

But seriously, don't you think after reviewing TR 1, 2, 3 and the Gold version, you guys can finally give up the subtle (ahem) references to Lara's breasts? And couldn't you at least restrain the sex references to the games that have sex appeal written all over it rather than use Indiana Jones as the basis for a cheap laugh? I mean, this PC mag is meant for mature audiences isn't it? What's with all the childish nature?

**Jack Banh, Email**

*All sexual innuendo in PCPP should be approached in an ironic frame of mind. That way you can feel clever and still laugh at the same time.*

## Byte Size

Instead of that spraypaint feature I reckon you should piss your symbols on the wall.How funny would it be fragging someone while they're pissing...?

**Kaiser_SV ?-?, Email**

*Absolutely hilarious, we're sure...*

## Bugging Me

Just a frivolous question that has been bugging me for a while: how do you play, complete and review an average of over ten games in one month? Do you actually finish every game you review? I mean, I normally take three or four months to complete a game, if not longer! Just how do you do it?

**Nik Douglas, Email**

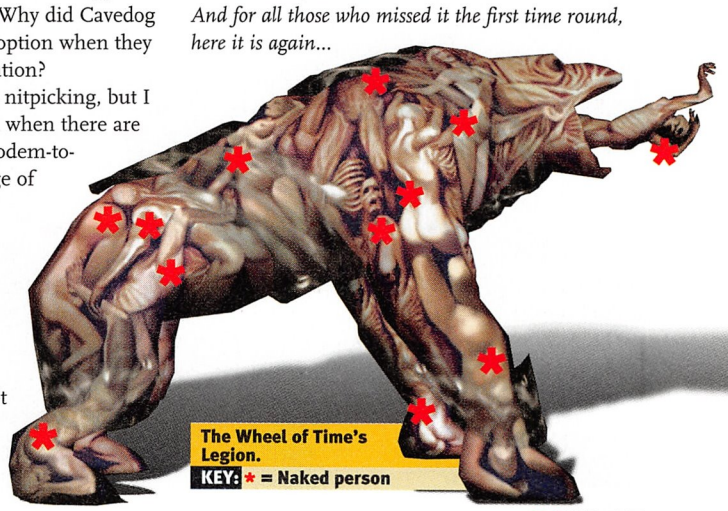
*Next Gaming has its own Reviewer Farming Facility from which we have all been recruited, genetically modified to play games at the expense of all normal human activity. How do we do it? We cannot do anything else.*

## Skin Of The Dog

Shame on you! Printing a picture with blatant nudity on it. Did you realise that skin of the dog in your Wheel of Time preview (PCPP#43 p44) is made up of naked ladies? Look! There's one upside down one on the front leg and another next to its head. Ignorance can be the only excuse...

**Nemesis, Email**

*And for all those who missed it the first time round, here it is again...*



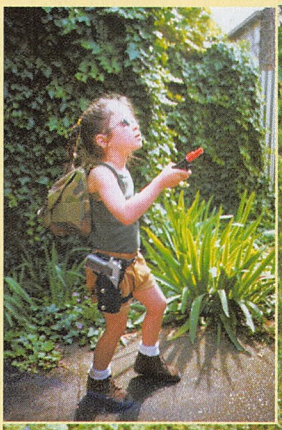
**The Wheel of Time's Legion.**
**KEY: * = Naked person**

# WHO'S THAT GIRL?

## LARA LOOKALIKE WINNERS!

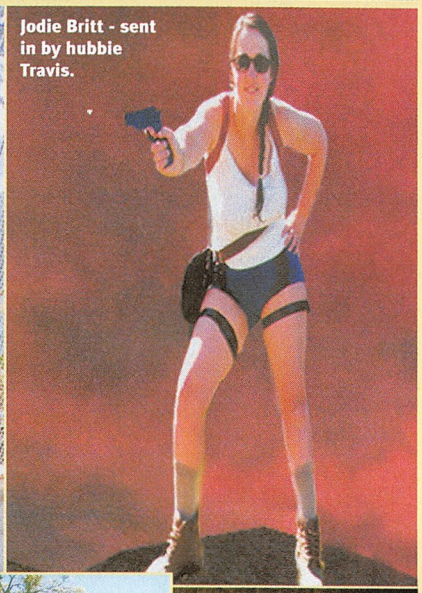
Back in the Good Old Days, playing dressups for the sake of a computer game was an exclusively male and mostly medieval affair. Today though, we've got Mums dressing up as Lara Croft! This is one of those simultaneously good and bad things. Seeing as we're responsible for this nonsense, we've no choice but to embrace the idea enthusiastically and make out, somehow, that this clearly bent behavior is somehow normal.

As the days slipped slowly by, the PCPP crew grew accustomed to the daily mail drop of more and more readers running around the local park with a plastic gun. Towards the end of the month, we'd reached the stage where we would simply refuse to do any work until we'd checked out the latest batch. On behalf of the entire Next Publishing staff, I'd just like to say that this competition brought us much happiness. Thanks to all who entered, tough luck to the non-winners, congrats to the actual winners, and hey, just because the comp's over, doesn't mean you have to ditch the outfit...

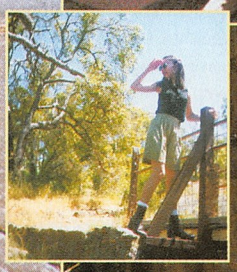


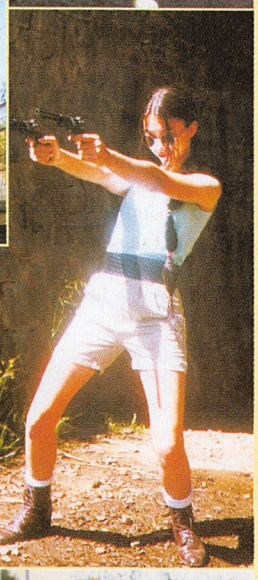



The incredible Rhiannon Warsito-Yarrow. More intrepid than the real Lara Croft.

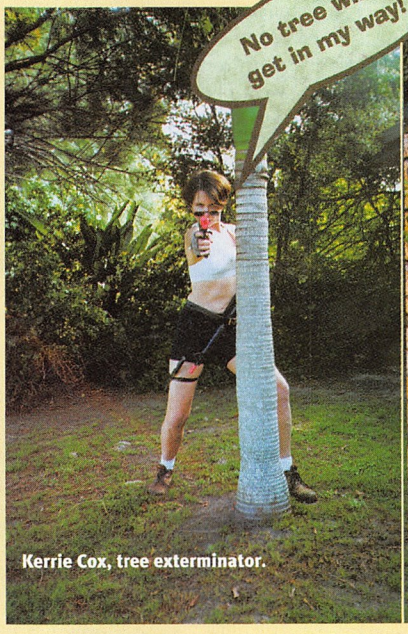


Jodie Britt - sent in by hubbie Travis.





Crystal Adams. Photography by Brett & Candace Warburton.




Kerrie Cox, tree exterminator.



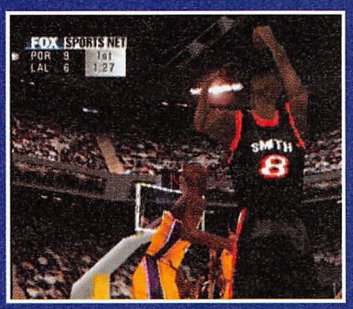
Kate Featherson, New Zealand.



Double trouble - Karmen & Marina Smith.

# INTRODUCING THE NEWEST WAY TO PLAY BASKETBALL

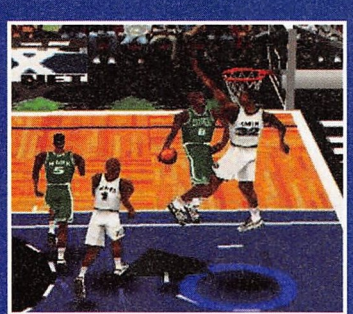



*Camera angles that put you in the action*



*Tons of different dunks*



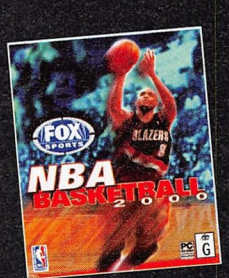
*Addictive gameplay that's fast and fun*

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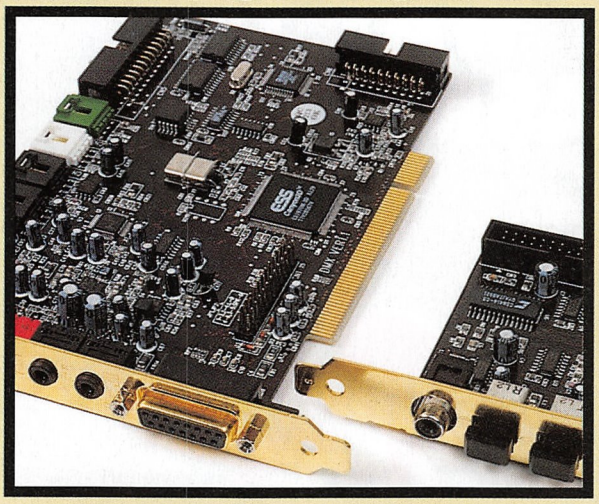
FOX SPORTS INTERACTIVE™

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# COMPETITIONS

## TERRATEC DMX SOUNDCARD



Terratec is a German based company that specialises in high-end sound equipment. It's hardly surprising that its first ever product for the home PC market is likewise very much in the high-end bracket. The DMX Sound System is a great soundcard, thanks in part to its quality ESS Canyon3D chip that ensures a comprehensive range of API support - A3D, EAX, DirectSound and MacroFX. Hugh gave it an Ultimate Hardware award on p106 if you're still in any doubt.

We've got ONE card courtesy of Innovision to give to a lucky reader who can answer this question:

***Q. What does EAX stand for?***

## THE WHEEL OF TIME

### 6 SIGNED COPIES OF ROBERT JORDAN'S PATH OF DAGGERS + 6 COPIES OF THE GAME

Robert Jordan has made a pretty good name for himself through writing fantasy fiction. In fact, it's statistically proven that 31% of PowerPlay readers actually own one of his Wheel of Time novels. We have six signed copies of Jordan's latest, Path of Daggers, to give away. But that's not all.

GT Interactive's Wheel of Time game is a spiffy first-person shooter that brings to vivid life Jordan's world of heroes, magic, and damn impressive architecture. It's a fine game, and one that requires a good deal more strategy than many similar titles. Read the review on p64 for the full appraisal and try to win a copy by answering this question:

***Q. Robert Jordan plans to finish the Wheel of Time series after how many books?***



## ULTIMA IX: ASCENSION

### 6 COPIES OF THE GAME

One of the most eagerly-awaited games in history has finally arrived. Ultima IX: Ascension: the final episode in the trilogy of trilogies, the last ever cardinal Ultima game, and probably the last single player title to be released by Origin. So has the five year wait been worth it? We have our say elsewhere this issue, but you can decide for yourself by winning a copy right here thanks to Electronic Arts. Just answer the Ultima-related question below:

***Q. Name all the dungeons in the land of Britannia.***



### WHERE TO SEND

Write the answer, along with your name and address on the back of an envelope. Tip: Don't forget to put the competition name on the front of the envelope.

**All entries close February 1st.**

Send to:

**<competition name>**
**PC PowerPlay**
**78 Renwick St.**
**Redfern NSW, 2016**

### ISUUE 43 WINNERS

**SOUL REAVER**

*Q. List the essential items you would need to protect yourself against vampires. The most comprehensive and inventive entry will win, so get creative.*

*A.. Too long to list here.*

B. Leong, Balaclava, VIC
J. Pan, Balgowlah Heights, NSW
A. Evans, Kingston, TAS
B. Carletti, Huntfield Heights, SA
M. Vozzo, Underdale, SA
M. Natoli, Essendon, VIC

**GP500**

*Q. How many broken bones has Mick Doohan suffered in his World Championship career?*

*A. 34*

W. Bowyer, Noarlunga Downs, SA

**DRIVER**

*Q. Specifically, which cars did Michael Caine and co. drive in The Italian Job?*

*A. Mini Cooper S (Red, White & Blue)*

B. Hellard, Glen Iris, VIC
P. Blackmore, Officer, VIC
B. Hines, Greystanes, NSW
J. Gimblett, Kelmscott, WA
B. Symes, Giralong, ACT
S. Friedman, Newtown, NSW

**GRAND THEFT AUTO 2**

*Q. Insurance industry statistics tell us which make of car is the most commonly stolen in Australia?*

*A. Holden Commodore.*

L. Panton, Maidavale, WA
S. Olbromski, Springfield, NSW
B. Weier, Dalby QLD
M. Boaler, Cheltenham, VIC
R. Mortimer, Mount Barker, WA
L. Stanmore, Wauchope, NSW

## MYSTERY MEN

### 6 MYSTERY MEN PRIZE PACKS

Based on the Dark Horse comic book series, Mystery Men is an absurd superhero action/comedy. A motley gang of crime-fighting wannabes team up to rescue the veteran Captain America from the clutches of the evil Casanova Frankenstein. It all sounds incredibly silly, which is of course a compliment for this type of film. Our own Geoffrey Rush stars alongside Ben Stiller, Janeane Garofalo, Hank Azaria, Claire Forlani and Greg Kinnear, each of them dressed in some of the most ridiculous costumes on celluloid. United International Pictures have sent us six Mystery Men prize packs to give away. Winners will receive a Mystery Men t-shirt, black rubber rucksack, bungee ball, soundtrack, and an in-season pass to catch the film.

***Q. Mystery Men star Paul Reubens is also known as who?***



INTERVIEW: WE CHAT WITH ID SOFTWARE ABOUT QUAKE III AND BEYOND...
REVIEWS: DAIKATANA, URBAN CHAOS, INTERSTATE '82, AGE OF WONDERS, STAR TREK: HIDDEN EVIL, PLANESCAPE TORMENT

# COMING IN PC PowerPlay

PCPP #46 ON SALE FEBRUARY 9 2000

REVIEWED

# MESSIAH

## SHINY'S SECOND COMING



We're noticing a disturbing trend of carnival flavoured frivolity in computer games, so we'd like to ask:

# WHAT'S WITH ALL THE JUGGLING?

Having failed to make the grade as a dancing girl, Theo enrolled in Pharaoh's juggling school





Theo just knew he'd blend into The Sims neighbourhood if he just did what everyone else did...

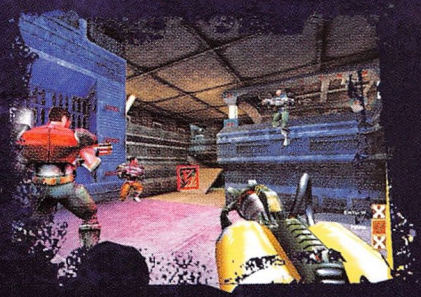
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✦ The most complete and challenging online multi-player experience ever.



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(does not require Unreal to play.)

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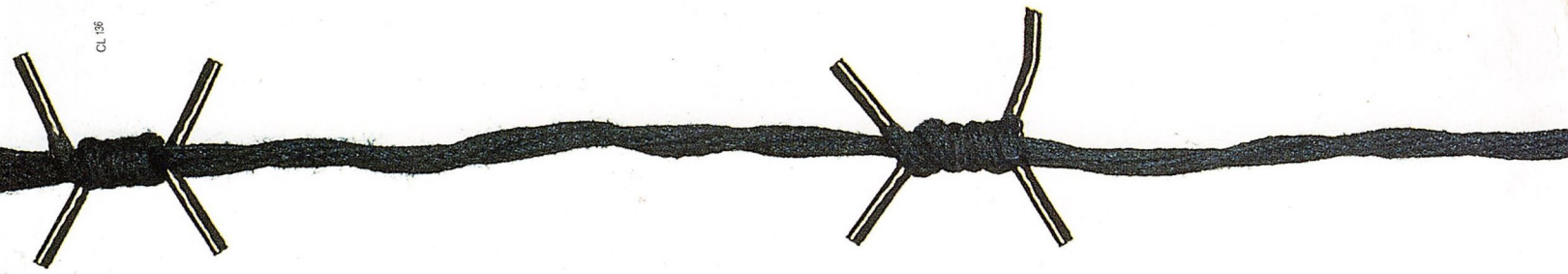
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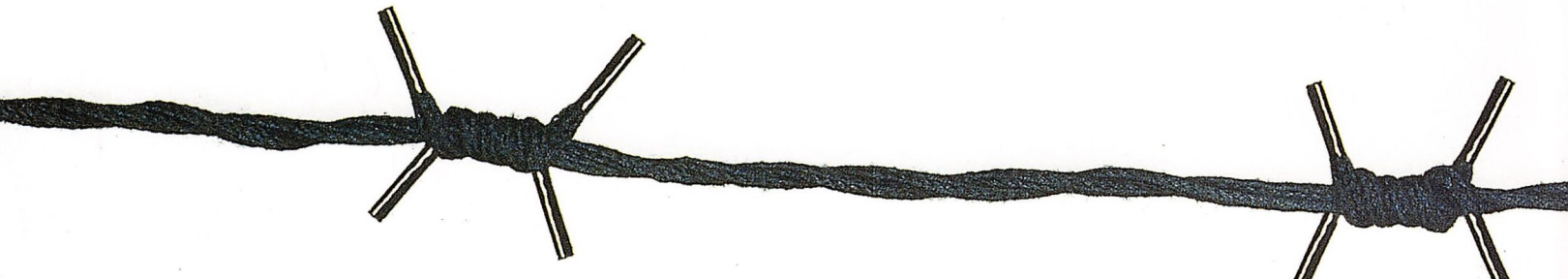
GT Interactive Software

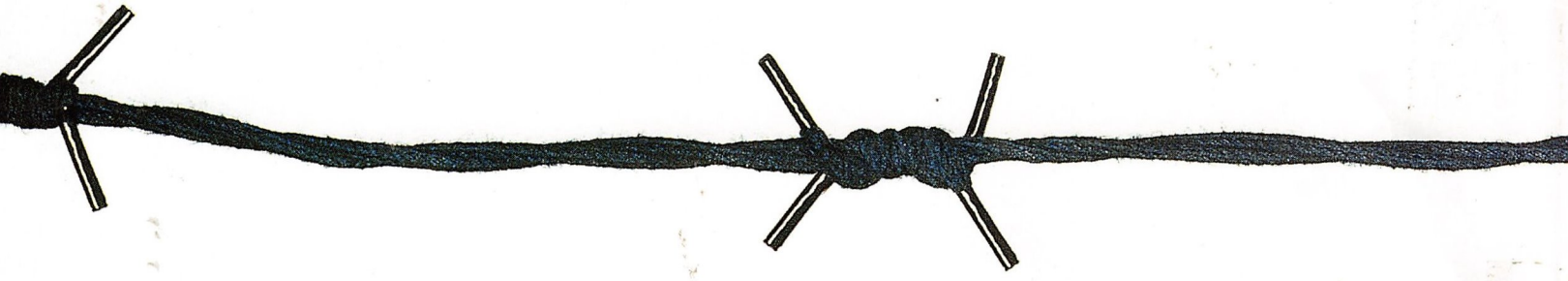
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